

CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS IN LATVIA BY CHANGING  
ETHNIC LAW

BY

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## **ABSTRACT**

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This thesis examines language and citizenship laws in Latvia to determine how they have been used to change Latvia's internal ethnic identity and external geopolitical relations. A discourse analysis of two of the region's major news sources is the central method for data analysis, allowing for a comparison of Russian and Latvian media portrayals of this situation. By examining newspapers from the region, my thesis considers how the Russian speaking population in Latvia is adapting to their situation. Secondly, the research explores how the Latvian government is and is not encouraging the merging of the ethnic Russian and Latvian speaking identities to form a new national identity. Language laws and educational reforms are important processes that help promote national identity, and both are examined in this research. The theoretical framework of this thesis draws from a combination of identity, geopolitical, and moral geography theories.

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**Map 1:** Latvia reference map.

Source: U.S. Central intelligence Agency 1998  
 Retrieved from  
 The Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection at  
[http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/europe/latvia\\_rel98.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/europe/latvia_rel98.jpg)

## **Chapter 1: Introduction and Theoretical Background**

. . . realizing that we are geographical increases the effectiveness of our actions, the clarity of our awareness, and the inclusiveness and generosity of our moral concerns (Sack, 1997, 1).

### **Introduction**

The initial idea for this thesis came about because of the time I spent in the Baltic countries. From May 2001 to August 2005, I was a United States Peace Corps Volunteer, first in southern Kazakhstan and then in northern Ghana. Before my Peace Corps experience, I had never traveled outside the United States. Having to live and work on the Kazakh steppe was a little bit of a shock. Early in my service, I came to realize that people are people, and that there is very little that separates people of different cultures. Students and fellow teachers would invite me to their homes and let me partake in their cultures and customs. Even though I was never fully integrated into their community, I was never fully excluded either. Kazakhstan was also my first experience with an ex-Soviet state.

In Ghana, I was exposed to a country that contained many different ethnic groups, languages, and religions and yet is very stable and different groups cooperate. I lived in the Upper East Region of Ghana among the Kasem. They occupied a very small part of Ghana, and had their own distinct language and culture. If I traveled ten miles to the south, I encountered a different group of people, with a different language. If I traveled east for 30 miles, there was another unique group with its own language and culture. Ghana contains about eight major and several other minor

ethnic groups. There are also ten major languages spoken in the country which is about the size of Oregon (CIA World Fact Book, 2008).

After finishing my service in Ghana, I backpacked around Eastern Europe for a couple of months, and stayed in the homes of local people that I had met on the internet. In Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, I had the opportunity to stay with many Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, and Russians. In Tallinn, Estonia, an ethnic Russian couple was kind enough to let me stay with them for several days. The wife had Estonian citizenship, though her husband was not a citizen; he had not taken the language exam. Since both of them were actually born in the territory of Estonia, a language exam seemed to me like an unfair regulation for citizenship. Kazakhstan, like Estonia and Latvia, has a higher percentage of Russian speakers than other former Soviet Republics. Unlike Latvia and Estonia, Kazakhstan granted citizenship to its Russian speakers after gaining independence (Law on Citizenship(1991), 2002). Latvia and Estonia's citizenship laws seemed strange and unfair to me after living in Kazakhstan and Ghana, especially in the way they tied language to citizenship.

The main objective of the thesis will be to examine language and citizenship laws in Latvia to determine how they have been used to change Latvia's internal ethnic identity and external geopolitical relations. A discourse analysis of two of the major news sources in the area will be the central method for data analysis since it will allow a comparison of Russian and Latvian media portrayals of this situation. By examining newspapers from the region, my thesis will consider how the Russian speaking population in Latvia is adapting to their situation. They are either staying in

Latvia, with some applying for citizenship, or they are leaving Latvia. This research will focus on the Russian speaking population's identity inside Latvia, how it has changed from the past, and where it might be heading in the future. In the context of this project, Russian identity is important, because ultimately it is the Russian speakers themselves who will decide whether to stay or to leave Latvia. If the Russian speakers can identify with Latvia, with the country and the people living there, they will be more likely to remain and contribute to the economy. Secondly, the research will explore how the Latvian government is and is not encouraging the merging of the ethnic Russian and Latvian-speaking identities to form a new national identity. A new, combined national identity could help to forge a new progressive state by promoting the ethnicity of all Latvia's different cultural groups, not only those who are in the majority or in power. Language laws and educational reforms are important processes that help promote national identity, and both will be examined in this research. The theoretical framework of this thesis will draw from a combination of identity, geopolitical, and moral geography theories.

The rest of this chapter focuses on the theoretical issues of the research, starting with identity issues, moving toward geopolitical issues, and finishing with moral issues. The second chapter deals with the history of the state of Latvia. It begins when Latvia was part of the Russian empire and progresses until the modern day. A large section of this chapter deals with the formation of Latvian citizenship after the collapse of the Soviet system. A short overview of the Latvian media and a methodological discussion comprises the third chapter. The discourse analysis

involves an examination of two news publications in the region during the past six years. This study of newspaper portrayals was done to determine the main issues concerning Russians living in Latvia. The fourth chapter examines and discusses the results of the discourse analysis using the geographical perspective of identity and geopolitics. Finally, the fifth chapter will tie the discourse analysis together with the identity, geopolitical, and moral geographic frameworks that will be discussed in this chapter. After discussing the results, a potential course for Latvia's government concerning its Russian population will be suggested. I am interested in how this process of government generated identity formation has affected the Russian speaking population's sense of identity, and how this identity affects the political dynamics of the country now and in the future.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Identity Issues**

Guntrum Herb (1999) has argued that the concept of attaching an ethnic identity to a particular piece of territory has evolved over time. Prior to the 1400s, a ruler's territory was determined by where his subjects lived. The land itself was not as important as who lived on the land. The current idea of the nation-state is relatively new. A nation-state is a specific piece of territory that is inhabited by members of a specific ethnic group who are able to govern themselves (Herb, 1999). The 1600s saw the beginnings of the nation-state system which attached political power to pieces of territory. Instead of the traditional system of a ruler with loyal subjects, the nation-

state controlled everyone living within a certain boundary. In the nineteenth century, the idea of attaching the majority group's ethnic identity to the state became normal. It was believed that an ethnic nation or group could only prove its existence by possessing a piece of territory. In this way, territory acts as a haven for an ethnic group's culture and history, and motivates the nation to create its own state, with its own form of government (Herb, 1999).

According to Smith (1991) nations combine two different sets of elements to form their collective national identity. For different nations, these elements might be combined in different proportions. The first set is civic and territorial elements that identify a nation to a specific piece of land and sometimes a specific government. The other set comprises of a nation's ethnic or genealogical identity. This type of identity can be traced back through generations to common ancestors. So, for nations, one type of identity is based on the territory a nation occupies and the other is based upon a common genealogy of the members. The identity of a nation is similar to the identity of residents of a state, but they are still different.

Residents of a self-governing state also have two types of identity. The first is civic identity, based on loyalty towards the government and the territory of the state. The second type of identity is ethnic identity, based on the common language and culture prevalent throughout the state (Herb, 1999). The West African country of Ghana will serve as a good example. Ghana contains several different ethnic groups or nations, each with their own culture and language. At the same time, each member of these ethnic groups is a citizen of Ghana. They share the same national flag,

anthem, and government, all symbols of their common civic identity. A person might be an ethnic Akan or Ewe but regardless, all are Ghanaian. English, which was Ghana's colonial language, was retained as the new national language. English was spoken by the educated population, allowing it to serve as a common and neutral language for the new state.

Governments help to construct, define, and change the state's civic identity by pursuing specific policies. They can integrate ethnic identities into the state's civic identity or they can choose to keep ethnic identity and civic identity separate. Passing citizenship and language laws and teaching aspects of specific cultures or histories in schools and ignoring others are some of the ways governments can create a particular type of identity for their states (Herb, 1999).

The form of identity which dominates a state's national identity depends on, and is influenced by, the government in power and the discourse it spreads throughout the state's population. In some states more emphasis is placed on "dominant ethnic identity" (France, Germany) while others focus more on creating a "broader civic identity" (United States, Ghana).

In order to unite the people governed by it, states employ nationalism to promote a common civic identity. Identity is something a person possesses, either having been born with it or having obtained it later in life. Nationalism, instead, is a set of criteria used by the state to help unite its population.

The twentieth century has been dominated by nationalism. Nationalism is, of course, not a new phenomenon; its foundations lie in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, only in the past hundred years has it become a dominant force in world affairs. In this

period, the nation has become a basic unit for the organization of human society, and serves as one of the main building blocks for the modern international system (Melvin, 1995, 1).

Nations are groups of people with a common heritage. They can be thought to have formed through one of two ways. The first is the primordialist concept, which suggests that nations have always been around. They are unique, unchanging entities that consist of people with the same forefathers and heritage. The other way nations can form is that they can be constructed or created. Governments and elites, especially through the educational system, distribute collective nationalism to the people. Herb suggests that nations are formed through the second method, that they are created by humans. In this theory, they are not natural, unchanging creations, but instead are shaped and defined by the leaders and citizens who belong to them (Herb, 1999). Other studies have come to the conclusion that national identities are not things to be ‘awakened’ from the depths of time. “Instead, research has suggested a more instrumental understanding whereby the origins of nations and nationalism lie in modern forms of economic activity, bureaucracy, secularism and interstate relations” (Melvin, 1995, 1). These studies suggest that nations are not only created, but they also change over time (Melvin, 1995).

I plan on using these ideas about identity and nationalism to show that the Latvian government is constructing a common civic identity based on elements of ethnic identity, namely language. Also, since ethnic identity, according to Herb, is something that has been constructed over time by the government, scholars, and elites. Using Sack’s framework, which will be discussed later, I will argue that ethnic

identity should not be used to exclude people or to stop someone from obtaining citizenship.

## **Geopolitical Issues**

Identity and nationalism are not confined to a state's borders. They also transcend borders and enter into the realm of geopolitics. Different groups want to form their own states, which has generated some confusion in the difference between a "state" and a "nation". "Of the approximately 170 more or less sovereign countries today, Iceland, metropolitan Portugal, Norway and one or two others constitute exceptions in terms of homogeneity; practically all the rest are ethnically heterogeneous" (Ra'anana, 1991, 4). An ethnic group's *staatsvolk* is defined as the location of a state's main ethnic group and its cultural core. When a state is smaller than its *staatsvolk*, members of the primary ethnic group live outside the territory of the state. An example is the Indian communities that live outside of India. A state can also be larger than its *staatsvolk*, which is the case in France. France contains the *staatsvolk* of the French nation but along the edges of the state's territory within its borders are other ethnic groups like Celts, Basques, Catalonians, and Bretons (Ra'anana, 1991). This means that the idea of a state being the home of only one particular nation is usually false because there are several different ethnic groups residing in the territory of any given state. Sometimes in countries with multiple ethnic groups, one group will control the government and create a nationality for the state based on the culture of the ruling ethnic group. Agnew (1994) writes that we should not view states as cultural containers because they do not truthfully represent a

homogenous cultural group within the state's borders. Additionally, phenomena important to a state can transcend its borders. For example, if the state mistreats an ethnic minority that lives on the fringes of its territory, it could have problems with a neighboring state where that ethnic minority constitutes the majority.

State governments and the ruling elite want to retain their sovereignty. One of the ways they do this is through the idea of ‘security’. They justify their existence due to some ‘threat’ from another state containing a different ethnic group/nation. One of George Bush’s justifications for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan was the idea that by fighting the terrorists aboard, the United States would not have to fight the terrorists on American soil. Also, this is the justification for building a wall between Mexico and the United States to prevent illegal immigration.

Security is only possible for a tightly defined spatial unit endowed with sovereignty. Hence, politics, in the sense of the pursuit of justice and virtue, could exist *only* within territorial boundaries. Outside is danger, *realpolitik*, and the use of force. Security is then, by definition, the defense of a particular spatial sovereignty and the politics *within* it (Agnew, 1994, 62).

Agnew (1994) argues that a state's foreign and domestic policies need to be consistent. This means that a country cannot deny one ethnic group's citizenship when it belongs to an international group that believes it is unjust to deny citizenship based on ethnicity. By entering into the European Union, Latvia cannot have laws within its own borders which run counter to European Union standards. They must adhere to its laws in order to be part of the European Union.

Newman (1999) expands on this idea by saying that the world has become a much more complicated place with the rise of “supra-state and intra-state levels of

territorial orderings" (13). States have to share some of their power and work with these organizations. This also changes the meanings of boundaries between states. Where once a boundary was just a border between two separate states, now it might have a different meaning. For example the border between Latvia and Russia has that meaning, because now it is also the border between the European Union and Russia and the border between NATO and Russia. Latvia has given up some of its control of the border in exchange for added protection against Russia. States sometimes want to join global organizations like NATO and the EU. However, such a move opens borders and takes away some of their power. At the same time, it provides more protection and security than they could provide on their own. Additionally, countries want to strengthen their ethnic identity and autonomy within their boundaries and protect their unique cultural identity. This allows borders to take on an added dimension of inclusion and exclusion towards different ethnic groups and cultures (Newman, 1999).

Inside a country's border, the government in power can exclude an ethnic group by requiring the knowledge of a particular language as a prerequisite for citizenship. By declaring just one language the official state language puts minorities who do not speak it at a disadvantage. By controlling citizenship, a state also controls who will vote, which affects policy on citizenship and other issues.

I will use Agnew's idea of consistency in foreign and domestic issues along with Newman's idea of multiple territorial orderings to show that Latvia's best course of action for itself and for its relations with Russia is to follow the European Union's

advice and increase the naturalization of Latvia's Russian population. This has the potential to ease tensions between Russia while also promoting Latvia as a country that cooperates with its neighbors for the good of all its residents.

### **Moral Issues**

A moral position must be justified to others on the basis of a less partial or impartial reason, not on self-interest, custom, or practice (Sack, 1997, 6).

Sack argues that people create the places around them and that the places around us are not static but change over time. People have the ability to change the places around them by the decisions they make and the actions they take (Sack, 1997). If a community feels strongly about not having a Walmart in their neighborhood, they can choose to not shop there. If enough of the community does this, then the Walmart will be forced to shut down. This will result in a change in the use of that space. Humans can influence the type of change taking place. Sack argues that either we can create places that become better or places that become worse. Places are neither good nor bad, but it is the way people use a place that can be described as being good or bad (Sack, 2001).

"Better" and "worse" are relative terms. The people who bring about change have to decide for themselves what is "good" or "bad", which can be done in one of two ways. The first is to look at the place instrumentally, which involves rating it on how well it achieves the goals of what we want to do there. This type of evaluation is very relative to an individual's judgment (Sack, 2001). As a case in point, the owner and employees of a factory believe their factory is a "good" place because it provides

them employment. Also it provides a sense of pride by allowing them to support their families. Other people who live by the factory might not feel that it is a “good” place, because of the way it physically pollutes the space around it. Maybe the factory puts off a foul odor that is smelled for miles around or maybe it dumps waste into the nearby river. Also, the factory could be employing migrant workers, which people in the community feel are changing the ethnic makeup of their town. The different people in these examples are looking at the factory instrumentally. They see how it will personally affect them and their community. By using instrumental goals to solve a problem, a conflict or standstill will be created because both parties will feel that they are correct and the other is wrong. Two ways can be used to break the standstill. The first results in the bigger and stronger of the two groups overpowering the weaker group and forcing their instrumental values on them. The other involves both groups working together to create a solution that is beneficial to all parties involved. This second method requires using intrinsic values.

Intrinsic judgments are the second type of geographical judgments. These are more universal and Sack argues that they are based on two criteria. The first is that they create places that help us better see through to “the good and the real”, and the second is that they “increase the variety and complexity” of the place (Sack, 2001). The factory owners and employees could help create a better place by not polluting the area around their factory. They could find ways to control the bad odor and the dumping of toxins into the river. The townspeople could become more open to migrant workers in their community by interacting with them at town functions and

encouraging them to become part of their community. Both sides gain when they realize that the community needs the migrants to work in the factory, and the employers realize that polluting the river hurts their workers and themselves.

In short, intrinsic geographic judgments can help guide us to a moral landscape that integrates the currently fractured and competing concerns of the political, economic, the intellectual, and the natural. It guides us to a world in which it is good to create places that expand our awareness, that increase variety and complexity and that sees participation in these processes as giving to democracy and the economy (Sack, 2001, 125).

Intrinsic judgments lead to places that are better for the entire human race and the planet in the long run. They look past the biases of individuals and focus on the common good. They increase the diversity of a given place by exposing people to more possibilities and expand upon the number of available solutions. When analyzing the discourse analysis and during my discussions of the results, I will think intrinsically to provide the best possible conclusions. The government and people of Latvia also need to examine their citizenship laws and relations with Russia intrinsically to provide real solutions that will benefit everyone involved.

## **Chapter 2 – Historical Background**

To understand the current situation of Latvian Russians, it is useful to understand Latvia's geography and history. Latvia's location is important in understanding the people inside its borders. The other groups and cultures that surround Latvia influence the people living inside the territory of Latvia because of their close proximity. This influence by proximity is not only the case today but it has been like this throughout history. Different ethnic groups have controlled the present-day area of Latvia and have shaped its people and culture.

### **General Geographic Setting of Latvia**

Latvia is located in Eastern Europe on the Baltic Sea. It, along with Estonia and Lithuania, forms the Baltic States. Latvia has a maritime climate with year-long precipitation and moderate winters. The terrain is composed of a low lying fertile plain with a slightly hilly area in the eastern section of the territory. Latvia shares borders with Lithuania and Belarus in the south, Russia to the east, Estonia to the north, and the Baltic Sea forms its western border. Riga, which is situated where the Daugava River meets the Gulf of Riga, is not only the largest city in the country but also the capital (CIA World Fact Book, 2008).

### **Latvia under the Russian Empire and the First Latvian State (Before 1940)**

Latvia has a long and complex history. Due to space and time considerations, my research will focus briefly on the time period before the beginning of the first

Latvian state in 1918. The history of the region since 1918 has been the major force leading to the current Latvian Russian situation. But the roots of the Latvian Russian situation lie further back in time, so to understand the problem it is helpful to look briefly at Latvia's history before it became independent.

In 1918, Latvia proclaimed its independence from Russia and became an independent republic. For several centuries before this, the territory of Latvia had been part of the Russian Empire (Monden & Smits, 2005). During his reign, Peter the Great acquired and brought Latvia under Russian control. Prior to this, Latvia was dominated both politically and economically by German merchants. Now Russia had political control, but the German merchants still retained economic control over the territory (Melvin, 1995).

One of the most important early developments in the establishment of a common Latvian identity occurred in 1816. The Russian government started requiring documentation for its citizens which involved assigning surnames to all the peasants in the region. This created a noticeable distinction between the German, Russian, and Latvian residents (Zake, 2007). For example, Latvian surnames end with an "s", whereas Russian surnames usually end in "ov" for males and "a" for females.

The Latvian people and those who stood for Baltic nationalism preferred the Russians over the Germans. Unfortunately, the Russian government had no intention of permitting Baltic nationalism in the territory. The policies of Alexander II and Nicholas II were based on the "russification" of Latvia. These policies included promoting the Russian Language as the only language of instruction in Latvian

elementary schools and sending Orthodox missionaries to convert the population to the Russian church (Zake, 2007). The czars wanted the Russian culture to be the only culture in the region, which led to anti-Russian sentiment among the Latvians (Melvin, 1995, Zake, 2007).

Latvian nationalism arose rather late in the mid nineteenth century, unlike German and Russian nationalism which had formed earlier in their respective countries (Zake, 2007). Most ethnic Latvians had been peasants under the Russians, who were the ruling class, and the Germans, who formed the merchant and trading classes. It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that the university educated class of Latvians began to emerge. These Latvian intellectuals formed a group known as the “Young Latvians”, whose purpose was identifying, preserving, and promoting Latvian culture through publication of their scholarly articles. They based their Latvian identity and history on a rejection of the German and Russian ideas of history. Their goal was to create something new and unique for themselves by setting themselves and Latvia apart from German and Russian nationalism (Zake, 2007). They decided the best way to do this was to go out into the rural areas in the region and collect old folk songs, myths, and local traditions. Also, they worked on formalizing the rules of grammar in the Latvian language.

Early Latvian nationalists did not merely awaken a pure Latvian tradition that has been suppressed by Russian Imperial rule. Instead, Latvian (similarly to Lithuanian and Estonian) nationalism was a set of intellectual ideas that combined Russian and German nationalisms as applied to a local context (Zake 2007, 308).

Their main objective was to preserve this material for the new Latvian nation they were creating, a nation in this sense being a collective ethnic identity. However, collecting material was not the only aspect of this process. Some scholars have suggested that the early Latvian nationalists would also invent stories to incorporate into the Latvian culture they were creating (Zake, 2007). These invented stories included creating myths about a “glorious Latvian people” that existed before the Russians and Germans began to suppress them (Zake, 2007).

Preservation of the Latvian culture was not the only reason the Young Latvians collected these folk tales; they thought that by creating a culture for their ethnic group they would achieve the social status and historical heritage possessed by their German and Russian counterparts (Zake, 2007). To achieve equality of social status to the other great European nations was the primary objective of the Young Latvians in creating a Latvian nation. It was not to create an independent state or to leave the Russian Empire, at least not until the First World War and the collapse of the Russian Empire. After the Young Latvians had formed their “Latvian identity,” they began to disseminate and teach it to the rural peasants (Zake, 2007). The rural peasants were the people whose native language, Latvian, allowed them to be more open towards the Young Latvians’ collective “Latvian” identity. The Russian landowners and German merchant classes already had their own ethnic identities and did not speak the Latvian language. These factors would have made the Young Latvians less inclined to approach the Germans and Russians with the idea of converting their identity to Latvian.

The Russian Revolution provided Latvian intellectuals with an opportunity to form their own state based on Latvian nationalism. Germany and Russia had both been weakened by the First World War which allowed Latvia, along with Lithuania and Estonia, to form their own independent states. This was achieved with relative ease and without bloodshed.

When Latvia formed in 1919-1920, the rights of the non-Latvian ethnic groups residing in Latvia were protected in the country's constitution (Hughes, 2005). All ethnic groups were granted citizenship, including the Russian and Belarusian populations residing there. Of course, even fifteen years after independence the Russian population was still rather small, comprising only 8.8% of the total population compared with the 77% Latvian majority (Monden & Smits, 2005). Inside Latvia's borders, culture flourished during this period. Outside of them, Latvia became a member of the League of Nations and a respected member of the international community. Many of the Russian intellectuals who fled the new communist government in the Soviet Union resettled in the Baltic States during this time.

### **Latvia under Soviet Control (1940-1991)**

Part of the reason the Soviet Union allowed the formation of the new independent Baltic States was that the Soviet leadership assumed the Baltic States would soon collapse and then be engulfed by the Soviet Union. The Soviets began plotting the demise of Latvia in the 1920s and continued into the 1930s (Rostoks,

2006). In 1940, the Soviet Union invaded Latvia, and a year later forced Latvia and the other Baltic countries into the Soviet Union. Nazi Germany invaded soon after and forced the Soviets out of Latvia. The Nazis were seen as liberators by many Latvians, who also fought against the Soviet army during World War II. This led to several problems with the Soviet and Russian governments, respectively, when the Soviets resumed control in 1944 and after Latvia regained its independence in 1991 (Monden & Smits, 2005).

After the Nazis retreated from Latvia, the Soviet Union regained control of the territory. Latvia, after World War II, was incorporated into the Soviet Union. Many Russian speakers were relocated into Latvian territory by the Soviet government to increase Latvia's loyalty towards the Soviet Union and to make it more culturally like the dominant Russian group in power. Also, many military officers were allowed to retire inside Latvia's borders (Hughes 2005, Melvin 1995). In the 1960s, the majority of Russian speakers entered the country to work in the new Soviet factories located in the larger cities of Riga, Daugavpils, and Ventspils (Pisarenko 2006, Melvin 1995). The Russian migrants worked mainly in, and dominated, the new Soviet manufacturing centers. They also supplied workers for the energy and transportation sectors (Melvin, 1995). Unlike Estonia, where the Russian immigrant population was spread more evenly throughout the country, Latvia's Russian immigrant population was, and still is, located predominantly in the major cities.

Latvia, along with the other Baltic countries, was perceived by Russians as being more "European" than other parts of the Soviet Union because of Latvia being

situated closer to Europe than Russia. Also the German presence in Latvia's early history drew it more towards Europe. By 1979, the influx of Russian speakers had caused a large population shift in the country's ethnic makeup; approximately half the population was ethnic Latvian and half non-Latvian. Population trends showing equal numbers of Latvians and non-Latvians persisted until Latvia regained its independence in 1990 (Monden & Smits, 2005). The following chart (Figure 1) shows the ethnic population change over the last 70 years. Several aspects of Latvian society had changed during this time span, but the most dramatic change was the percentage of the ethnic Russian population living there.

Prior to World War II, most of Latvia was populated by ethnic Latvians, with an additional small population of Russian speakers in the eastern sections of Latvia near today's Russian Federation border. This small group of Russian speakers had a long heritage in the area, living there for several generations (Pisarenko, 2006).

Figure 1 - Ethnic Population of Latvia 1935-2000

Ethnic Group	1935	1959	1970	1979	1989	2000
Latvians	77.0%	62.0%	56.8%	53.7%	52.0%	55.7%
Russians	8.8%	26.6%	29.8%	32.8%	34.0%	29.6%
Belarussians	1.4%	2.9%	4.0%	4.5%	4.5%	4.1%
Ukrainians	0.1%	1.4%	2.3%	2.7%	3.5%	2.7%
Others	12.7%	7.1%	7.1%	6.3%	6.0%	7.9%

(Monden & Smits, 2005)

From 1935 to 1989, which is roughly Latvia's Soviet period, the ethnic Russian population jumped from 8.8% to 34%, an increase of 25.2%, while its ethnic Latvian population fell by 25%. The increase in the Russian population was brought about by Soviet policy during this time. During this time period, the Soviet government sent

Russian workers to Latvia to work in the new manufacturing centers they were creating. Also the Soviet government was trying change the ethnic makeup of the country to a more pro-Soviet population. More Russians in Latvia meant less of an ethnic Latvian majority which might be easier for the Soviets to control. The Russian population reached its peak in 1989, when ethnic Latvians were minorities in the seven largest metropolitan centers in Latvia. In Riga, the largest city, only about 36.5% of the total population was ethnic Latvian (Melvin, 1995).

While the Latvian population in general had become urbanized during the Soviet period, with more than 70% of the population living in urban areas in 1989, Russians were almost exclusively confined to urban areas. More than half the Russians lived in Riga and its metropolitan district, about one fifth in the eastern region of Latgale (the only district where they also made up a considerable share of the rural population), while the rest were mostly confined to the larger cities in Kurzeme (the western district of Latvia) and Zemgale (the southern district) (Aasland, 2006, 53).

After regaining independence, Latvia's total population has declined due to negative net migration and natural decrease.

Even though the ethnic Latvian population was losing its majority status due to the influx of Russians during the Soviet period, its relations with these new Russian immigrants was not overly tense or unfriendly. One way to confirm this is to look at the rates of intermarriage between ethnic Russians and Latvians during this period. In 1988, more than a third of the marriages involving Latvians were with a member of another ethnic group (Melvin, 1995).

Another odd fact about the Russian migration to Latvia was the number of former prisoners who immigrated to Latvia. During the Soviet period, the present day

territory of the Russian Federation was off limits to former prisoners of the Soviet Union, so many of them relocated to the Baltic republics. Some sources believe that as many as 23% of the new immigrants arriving in the Baltic republics in the 1980s had been prisoners (Melvin, 1995).

Due to their new environment, the identities of Russian immigrants also changed once they had lived in Latvia for some time. These were people who lived under a Soviet identity, had lost a lot of their own cultural identity, and had become disconnected to their own historical roots (Melvin, 1995). Some would say the Russian identity had started to become “Balticized.”

### **The Current Latvian Independent State (1991-2008)**

The following discussion of recent Latvian history is divided into five sections: Latvian language and citizenship laws, Russian foreign policy towards Latvia and Latvia's EU and NATO ascension, Latvian and Russian border issues, Latvian economic activity, and Latvian language and education. These themes were dominant in the academic literature, and I found that in the process of doing the discourse analysis these themes were some of the most frequently represented.

#### **Language and Citizenship Laws**

In 1991, after more than 50 years of Soviet control, Latvia regained its independence.

Since the collapse of Communism, there have been dramatic changes in Latvia, and these have also affected the identity and belonging of the country's residents. In the 1990s, it must be noted, millions of people in Eastern Europe suffered an identity crisis, because their

geographic, spatial and political identities had collapsed, and new ones had not yet emerged (Brikše & Zelče, 2006, 81).

Before 1989, the Russian language was the primary language of government, business, and academia throughout all of the Soviet Union, including Latvia. Latvian speakers had been highly motivated to learn Russian, but Russian speakers had had no real motivation to learn Latvian (Pisarenko, 2005). With the end of the Soviet Union, the Russian speakers in the Baltic countries lost their ruling status to the local Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian ethnic groups throughout the region (Monden & Smits, 2005). It should be noted that in Latvia, official demographic distribution is decided by a person's language rather than ethnicity. There are Russian speakers and Latvian speakers (Pisarenko, 2006). Russian speakers include Russians, but also Belarusians, and Ukrainians.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, several new states were created. Agnew (1994) notes that these states expressed a desire to be different and unique from the other newly independent states. They created their own symbols, like flags and currencies, but they also had to create economic ties and to avoid offending their neighboring states. Each new state had to create its own laws and governments and had to decide who would be granted citizenship.

In Lithuania, ethnic Lithuanians form a clear majority of the population. This majority status allowed every nationality to be granted citizenship because the ethnic Lithuanians would still hold the majority power. Lithuania also contains a large number of ethnic Poles. Denying this group citizenship would have not been a good

political move with Poland and other European countries with which Lithuania wanted to set up economic ties.

In Estonia and Latvia, the titular nationalities only compromise a slight majority. This prompted the early Estonian and Latvian governments to construct citizenship requirements on ethnic guidelines to ensure the titular nation's dominant role in government (Hughes, 2005, Krickus, 2006). Estonia and Latvia were not primarily concerned with offending the new Russian Federation with their citizenship policies. Instead, they, like Lithuania, were looking towards Europe for future economic contacts and markets.

Immediately following independence, Latvia had to develop a system of government, build relations with other world states, and establish its own economic system and markets. This responsibility was taken on by a group of elites with the intention of developing the new state in the image they wished it to have. This included instilling a strong sense of Latvian nationalism into the new state (Melvin, 1995). One of the first items this group had to decide was how to handle the Russian Soviet period immigrant population. Three basic concerns with this issue were presented, the first being the sheer size of the Russian speaking community which comprised about 40% of the population. The second concern was how the independence movement had played out and how the new government would take shape. The last concern was how the Russian government would respond to the issues of the ethnic Russians in Latvia (Melvin, 1995).

During the independence movement many Russians in Latvia had supported the idea of an independent Latvia and even campaigned and voted for it:

The Baltic Russian-speaking settlers emerged from independence struggle as the most market-oriented and democratic of the settler communities in the former Soviet Union. The majority in these communities have [sic] consistently expressed support for the independence of the Baltic states and lack a strong affinity with Russia. Moreover, the comparatively high standard of living in the Baltic region - at least compared with the Russian Federation – is a powerful stimulus for loyalty to the new states (Melvin, 1995, 53).

In 1990, the transitional Latvian parliament decided that they did not have the authority to decide who would and would not be citizens. It was determined that there would be an election by “restored citizens” that would choose a new parliament (Muižnieks , 2006a). A “restored citizen” was considered any person who had been a citizen of Latvia before the Soviet government took control in 1940, or their descendants even if they had never lived in Latvia. Since most of the Russian immigrants came to Latvia after 1940, this tipped the parliamentary election toward the Latvian side. A pro-Latvian nationalist government was elected and political groups like the Citizen’s Congress “whose stated aim was ridding Latvia of all migrants who had come during the Soviet era” began to emerge (Melvin, 1995, p38).

The change from ethnic Latvians and Russians cooperating in order to secure independence, to a more nationalistic Latvian government caused many Russians who were interested in working with Latvians, and Latvians who were sympathetic to Russians, to leave or be forced out of governmental politics (Melvin 1995). Having no ethnic Russians or their supporters in the early government allowed the parliament

to pass laws basing Latvian citizenship on the Latvian language, which meant that an ethnic Latvian government would remain in power.

The Latvian approach to the settler issue had two main consequences. First, the bureaucracy has grown increasingly powerful as the main arbiter of decisions. Since a requirement to work in the bureaucracy is fluency in Latvian, it has been steadily purged of non-Latvians. The Russian settlers are now at the mercy of civil servants who are unaware of their problems or even opposed to their presence in the country. Second, faced with an unsympathetic bureaucracy and lacking moderate non-Latvian organizations, the Russian population has been forced to rely on more confrontational organizations such as Equal Rights for their protection (Melvin, 1995, 54).

In the early 1990s, the new Latvian parliament passed laws requiring potential citizens of the new country to gain language proficiency in Latvian. These laws were revised in 1998. Currently citizenship is based on five main points:

1. Anyone who was “a Latvian citizen on June 17, 1940 and their descendants” are considered citizens.
2. People who have been naturalized according to the law.
3. Children who have been found in Latvia with unknown parents.
4. Orphans living in Latvia.
5. Children whose parents were citizens of Latvia when that child was born (Parliament of Latvia, 1998).

Russian speakers who came to Latvia in the 1940s and 1950s due to Soviet migration practices were not deemed citizens, nor were their children who were born in Latvia. For example, a Latvian who left in 1939 to live in the United States would still be considered a citizen under the law, as would their children, who might never have stepped foot in Latvia (Hughes, 2005). In contrast, a Russian whose parents had

come to Latvia in the 1950s and had been born and always lived in Latvia would not be given automatic citizenship, but would instead have to pass the language exam to gain citizenship.

This policy has excluded the Russian speaking population from the new government. Currently, many Russians speakers are not citizens, and cannot vote in national elections (Aasland, 2002). To become a citizen of Latvia they must become naturalized, which requires:

1. having permanently resided in Latvia for at least 5 years prior to applying for citizenship.
2. being fluent in the Latvian language.
3. knowing the principles of the Latvian Constitution.
4. knowing the National Anthem of Latvia and Latvian history.
5. giving a pledge of loyalty to Latvia.
6. having a legal source of income.
7. renouncing all their former citizenships (Parliament of Latvia, 1998).

This implies that children who were born to non-citizens or stateless persons in Latvia after August 21, 1991 are not given citizenship at birth. However, it is easier for them to acquire it than for their parents. Children can begin to apply for citizenship when they reach the age of 15. They must have proof of graduation from a secondary or technical school which teaches primarily in Latvian, or posses a document that says they are fluent in Latvian. The opportunity to receive Latvian citizenship this way ends by the child's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The exclusion of ethnic Russians from the political sector has led to some unforeseen consequences, namely their dominance in the economic sector. Since many ethnic Russians lived in Riga, they had access to better transportation and communication networks which are available in the city. Also, many of them had old Soviet contacts in Russia and the rest of the region which became valuable business contacts after independence. They had a good command of Russian and were perceived as friendlier to Russian investors than their Baltic counterparts. Many ethnic Latvians see these Russian connections as a basis for not trusting ethnic Russians in Latvia (Krickus, 2006) Most of the banks in Latvia also are not controlled by ethnic Latvians but by other ethnic groups (Melvin, 1995). Ethnic Latvians do dominate the government sector but the economic sector is dominated by non-Latvian ethnic groups including Russians.

### **Russian Foreign Policy and EU and NATO Ascension**

Due to Latvia's geographic position and Russia's past involvement in Latvia's history and transportation systems, Russia continues to have a strong interest in Latvian governmental policies. The port of Riga is still tied to Russia by roads, pipelines, and railways. Riga is an ideal spot to ship goods and energy resources out or into Russia because there are many skilled ethnic Russian workers who understand Russian in the area. Also the port is virtually ice-free year-round which allows for year round-trade, unlike St. Petersburg (Berg, 2007).

Since Latvian independence, there has been constant tension between Latvia and Russia. Most Latvians see Russian policies being motivated by Russia's desire to

control every aspect of its former territory, while the Russian government sees Latvian politicians concerned only with increasing their own personal wealth (Berg, 2007). Since 1992, the Russian Federation has changed its foreign policy with Latvia three different times.

The first period began in 1992 with Russia's reluctance to withdraw its military from Latvia. It delayed military withdrawal until Latvia revealed what policy it would take towards ethnic Russians living in Latvia. Russia tried to use its military withdrawal as leverage to encourage Latvia to provide dual citizenship for Latvia's ethnic Russian population. This policy ended in the fall of 1994 when the last Russian troop left Latvia, even though ethnic Russians still had not been granted dual citizenship or even Latvian citizenship (Melvin, 1995, Muižnieks, 2006b).

The Russian government has also tried to support Latvian Russians by providing economic assistance in the form of education and travel benefits for Russians living in Latvia (Muižnieks, 2006b). Since 1999, Russia has provided large numbers of Russian language textbooks, as well as other educational materials. Also, the Russian government has paid for cultural field trips for groups of Latvian Russian students to visit St. Petersburg and other Russian historical sites. Finally, Russia has promoted its culture in Latvia by opening a cultural center in downtown Riga called the House of Moscow. This new center was funded by the Moscow City Council (Muižnieks, 2006b). There have also been rumors that Russian newspapers and magazines, and maybe even some political parties in Latvia, have been receiving

economic assistance from the Russian government, but none of these rumors have been confirmed (Muižnieks , 2006b).

The last and most pursued course Russia has taken to defend the interests of ethnic Russians is continuously bringing up the problem of ethnic Russians in Latvia to several different international organizations like the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU) (Muižnieks, 2006b). Russia began doing this in 1992 and has continued to this day. Russia not only hopes to gain equal rights for ethnic Russians in Latvia, but before Latvia received its European Union and NATO membership, Russia had hoped that by pointing out problems with Latvia's ethnic minority population it would slow down its accession to both of these organizations. Russia has also used this policy to try and divert attention away from its own minority rights violations in places like Chechnya (Muižnieks, 2006b). Russia was trying to prevent Latvia from joining the European Union and NATO. In attempting to remain in control of its former territory, Russia believes that by taking up the Latvian Russians' case, it might be able to keep hold of some of its former political power inside Latvia.

In presenting their concerns for Latvian Russians to the OSCE, NATO, and the EU, some scholars believe that Russia has misrepresented the facts. In their view, Russia often has presented these issues very inaccurately and distorted the situation. It has compared Latvia's treatment of ethnic Russians to a “genocide” or even to Cambodia under the rule of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge (Muižnieks, 2006b). At

Russia's behest, international organizations like OSCE have sent commissions to Latvia to investigate these claims. Their conclusion is that from a legal standpoint there is no real discrimination. Instead, most of the problems arise more from "political and social tension" and the government of Latvia needs to develop ways to encourage the inclusion of ethnic Russians into the larger national cultural identity (Melvin, 1995).

After Latvia became a member of the European Union in early 2004, Russia still continued this course of action. Latvia's inclusion into the European Union has actually given Russia some additional leverage with the organization. Now with the 2004 European Union expansion, large numbers of ethnic Russians are living inside the European Union and are its citizens (Berg, 2007). Latvia has also benefited from its NATO and European Union membership. The issues of minority rights and the Latvian-Russian border are now not only an issue between Russia and Latvia, but also between Russia and the European Union or between Russia and NATO. This has helped Latvia avoid being bullied by Russia and has increased its own sense of security and power. As Kārklina & Liegīs (2006) state, this new aspect in Latvian-Russian relations has been helpful in creating an open dialogue to ensure better results for both countries.

Latvian Russians have also used the European Union to defend their rights and issues, like citizenship and language, whereas the ethnic Latvians use it to help defend themselves from Russia (Merritt, 2000, Berg, 2007). This suggests that both Latvians and Latvian Russians see their future with Europe and hope Europe can

solve Latvia's minority problems (Berg, 2002, Berg, 2007). Latvian Russians turning to Europe instead of Russia is difficult for Russia to accept. Russia still believes its best interest is to defend the rights of Latvian Russians and will continue to offer support even if it is not wanted.

### **Latvian and Russian Border Issues**

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, international borders were recognized to define the borders of new countries. These new borders, once internal borders inside the Soviet Union, now, became external, international ones. The new states had to take control of management of these new, external borders and decide how best to administer them (Assmuth, 2006). Two major issues have developed in the Russian-Latvian border region. The first involves ethnic Russians living in Latvia who want to visit family living directly across the border in Russia. The other issue concerns the border directly. Since the reestablishment of Latvian independence, part of the border between Russia and Latvia was in dispute until a formal border treaty was signed in 2007.

Before 2000, residents of Latvia living near the Russian border were allowed to cross for Easter and other important religious holidays. Latvian Russians would visit the homes of relatives or family cemeteries across the border. Proof that they had relatives on the other side was the only thing they needed to cross the border. After 2000, these same people had to be on an official list of local visitors. The Latvian government would then issue a free or reduced fee visa which could be used a couple of times a year to cross the border (Assmuth, 2006, Lulle, 2006). When Latvia joined

the European Union in 2004, local residents were still allowed to cross the border by this method. These border practices ended in 2008 with the European Union Schengen zone expansion which eliminates border checkpoints between member countries. Now the border is closed off to these people, due to the fact that it separates not only Latvia from Russia, but also separates the Schengen zone from Russia (Assmuth, 2006).

Some ethnic Russians living in Latvia's border region are not official citizens, but they still see themselves as Latvian Russians, as do their counterparts across the border. Closing the border to them also closes off a part of their world. Where once they could move freely, now they are being prevented from communicating with relatives and people they care about (Assmuth, 2006). They have become people living at the edge of their country and the edge of the European Union, controlled not by people in Riga or Moscow but by people in Brussels.

While Riga has developed and grown wealthy since independence, this has not been the case for people living in the border region with Russia. This part of Latvia is one of its poorest regions and the Latvian government only started to provide economic assistance when the European Union began supplying funds (Assmuth, 2006, Lulle, 2006). Still, this part of Latvia is economically stronger than the area directly across the border in Russia. Due to an increase in economic development and more stringent border policies, Assmuth (2006) suggests that the border between Russia and Latvia will become more distinct as will the people on either side of it during the coming years. Russian children on the Latvian side will

learn Latvian in their schools and be more exposed to European culture. On the Russian side of the border, school children will be taught Russian and learn Russian culture. Over time, these people who were once close will grow further apart culturally.

The second border issue involves the location of the Russian-Latvian border. The Arene District, a part of Latvia from 1920-1944, was annexed by Russia prior to Latvia being incorporated into the Soviet Union. Technically, Latvia is not trying to recover this lost territory, but since the border has been changed from the original border treaty, it must be agreed upon by both the governments of Latvia and Russia to become the official border (Rostoks, 2006). At the beginning of negotiations, Russia tried to use the border treaty to slow Latvia's European Union ascension. When this did not happen, Russia decided that it would be in its best interest to resolve its border issue with Latvia (Rostoks, 2006). Latvia used its European Union status to help negotiate the border treaty with Russia. The European Union became involved with Latvia's border treaty with Russia because it is also part of the European Union's border with Russia. During this process, Russia tried, unsuccessfully, to use the border treaty as leverage for an increase in minority rights for Latvian Russians. Several of the articles in the discourse analysis discuss the border treaty between Latvia and Russia because it was finalized and finally signed by both countries at the end of 2007.

## **Latvian Economic Activity**

Since Latvia has become part of the European Union, it has grown at a faster pace economically than Russia. This has created an abundance of well paying jobs in the country. Many Latvian officials believed that Latvia's Russian speakers would leave Latvia and go to western countries in the European Union when Latvia became a full member in 2007 and border requirements were removed (Hughes, 2005). After regaining independence, Latvia's population declined due to negative migration and negative natural growth. The part of the population that is of working age has decreased most in recent years and is expected to decline more in the future. Not being able to replace retiring workers will negatively impact the Latvian economy.

In 2005, the population of Latvia was 2.302 million, which is 4,800 persons less than in 2004. According to *Eurostat* projections, the population of Latvia will decrease by 19.2% in the next 30 years – from 2.3 million to 1.8 million, and this percentage decrease will be the fastest in the European Union (Indāns & Roze, 2006, 122).

The Latvian residents who are emigrating tend to possess higher educations, with specialized degrees from secondary schools or universities (Krūmiņš & Leduskrasta, 2006). This creates a “brain drain” in Latvia and hurts its economic potential. Through its educational system, the Latvian government invests in potential workers, who upon completion of their education leave to work in another country. Not only do they leave the country, but they leave behind an aging population.

To replace this labor force, businesses in Latvia have looked towards many of the countries of the former Soviet Union, especially Russia and Ukraine. The workers in those countries know the Russian language, which Latvian business owners can

understand, and they are already accustomed to working with Russians and other Slavic immigrants. Unfortunately for the potential employers, these new workers are not well educated, requiring time and money to train (Indāns & Roze, 2006). This, combined with what the Latvian Institute of International Affairs calls a “negative attitude towards potential immigrants” by Latvian citizens and non-citizens alike, has led to a place that is not receptive towards the new workers Latvia needs to continue its current rate of production (Indāns & Roze, 2006). Instead of settling in Latvia, many workers from the former Soviet Union skip Latvia and go directly to Western European countries. Usually, the ones who do settle in Latvia stay for only a few years before leaving for better employment in Western Europe (Indāns & Roze, 2006).

The different sectors of Latvia’s economy contain workers from Latvian and non-Latvian backgrounds. Some sectors, however, contain disproportionate numbers of Latvians or non-Latvians. An example of this is the Latvian government, which employs more ethnic Latvians, about 83%, than other ethnic groups (Zepa & Šūpule , 2006). A majority of ethnic Latvians are also employed in the educational and agricultural sectors, whereas non-Latvians comprise more of the manufacturing sector. As Zepa & Šūpule (2006) state, it is better for the integration of different ethnic groups if they are able to find employment in different sectors of the economy. The divisions among economic sectors by ethnic groups increase ethnic tension by not allowing different groups to work together and become familiar with one another.

Zepa (2006) goes on to say that the chances of ethnic conflict are still low for Latvia because workers are paid well, no matter in what sector they work.

The Russian Federation has mainly been interested in certain sectors of the Latvian economy. Russia has invested heavily in Latvia's banking, transport, and energy sectors, with the energy sector receiving the most with over half of Russia's foreign direct investment (Dombrovsky & Vanags, 2006). This includes Gazprom, the Russian natural gas monopoly which owns a large percentage of Latvijas Gaze, the owner of the Latvian natural gas network (Dombrovsky & Vanags, 2006).

Another important aspect of the Latvian economy has been a shift in its trading partners since the reestablishment of independence. Before 1991, Latvia lacked connections to the world outside the Soviet Union and the majority of Latvia's trade was with other Soviet Republics (Dombrovsky & Vanags, 2006). In 1992, 45% of Latvia's exports were sent to CIS countries, while 30% of its exports went to Russia (Dombrovsky & Vanags, 2006). During the last 15 years this trend has completely turned around and now 76% of Latvia's exports go to European Union countries. Today only 12% and 8% go to countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States and Russia, respectively (Dombrovsky & Vanags, 2006). Also, Latvia's economy, which was once isolated inside the Soviet Union, became the European Union's fastest growing in 2006 (Dombrovsky & Vanags, 2006). Since 1991, trade with Russia has fallen and now Russia is Latvia's fifth largest importer of goods, "behind Lithuania, Estonia, Great Britain and Germany" (Lulle, 2006). Experts still consider Latvia's trade with Russia to be good and Dombrovsky &

Vanags (2006) found that there was “no ‘missing trade’ between Latvia and Russia”. “Missing trade” consists of trade that should be occurring between two countries but is not due to some political or ethnic reason. Countries trade more with other countries which are located close to them because it is more cost effective to ship goods short distances rather than long distances. Today, Latvia’s trade is balanced throughout the region, with Russia being one of many trading partners, instead of Russia being Latvia’s only trading partner.

### **Latvian Language and Education**

After regaining independence, the Latvian government needed a plan to integrate the large Russian speaking population into the new Latvian state. Instead of doing this quickly, the government was slow to develop an integration policy. They were hoping that many of the Russian speakers would decide to leave Latvia and return to Russia. A policy was finally adopted in 2001 with integration being based on knowledge of the Latvian language and loyalty to Latvia (Muižnieks, 2006). The Integration Program did speak of respecting and preserving minority cultures as part of its mission. Also, the assumption underlying the Integration Program is that the best way to integrate the various ethnic groups is for all ethnic groups to speak and communicate in Latvian fluently. Until this happens, the Latvian language takes precedence over the protection of minority languages (Djaéckova , 2003). The Integration Program also did not state concretely how the program would promote the protection of ethnic minority cultures and languages (Djaéckova , 2003).

In Latvia, the government has used the educational system to promote the use of the Latvian language, and has passed several laws making Latvian the language of classroom instruction. Also, the government has promoted the Latvian language by requiring Latvian language exams for all government officials and as a requirement to become a citizen of Latvia. No two subjects are more debated among ethnic Latvians and non-Latvians than language laws and the educational policy associated with these laws. Non-Latvians contend that these policies were created to give an advantage to the ethnic Latvian group, while ethnic Latvians contend that everyone in the country has an equal right to learn Latvian and achieve citizenship (Zepa & Šūpule , 2006).

“The Russian language is dominant among non-Latvians: a total of 58% of persons belonging to non-Russian minorities say that Russian is their native language, and 82% speak mostly Russian at home” (Zepa & Šūpule , 2006, 38). This continued preference of Russian has led to a social rift in Latvian society. The majority of government officials and politicians believe that all Russians residing in Latvia need to learn Latvian. They believe that the educational system is the best way to accomplish the integration of the two language groups (Djaéckova , 2003).

Besides the integration of society towards Latvian culture, the other main objective of the education policy is the preservation of the Latvian language. Government officials in Latvia believe that if Russian were to be allowed official state language status similar to Latvian, the Latvian language would eventually disappear. This issue is also highly divided on ethnic lines: “only 19% of Latvians support the idea that Russian should be made Latvia’s second official language, 87%

of Russians and 75% of people of other nationalities support this idea" (Zepa & Šūpule , 2006, 35).

During Latvia's Soviet period there were predominantly two types of secondary schools; Latvian and Russian. In Latvian schools, the language of instruction was Latvian, while in Russian schools it was Russian. After Latvia regained its independence this continued to be the case, until the amended Education Law came into effect on September 1, 2004 (Hogan-Brun, 2006). Originally, this law stated that from the fall of 2004, all instruction would take place in Latvian for Grade 10, "and that by 2007, all final exams in Grade 12 would be offered solely in Latvian" (Priedīte, 2005, 411). In 2004, only 10<sup>th</sup> grade students would be required to learn in Latvian. The next year, however, it would be the new 10<sup>th</sup> grade class and the 11<sup>th</sup> grade class who had been 10<sup>th</sup> graders the year before. The original version of the law did not pass but was instead amended to say that in the fall of 2004, at least 60% of all subjects in minority schools would be taught in Latvian and 40% could be taught in a minority language. Also, in 2007 Grade 12 exams would be given in Latvian, but students could provide their answers in the language of their choosing, either Latvian or some other minority language (Priedīte, 2005). The 60% course instruction requirement does not include Latvian language or Latvian literature classes, whereas the 40% of permitted instruction in a minority language does include Russian or another minority language and cultural classes (Hogan-Brun, 2006). It should be noted that in Latvia's universities the language of instruction is Latvian. Russian

language students who want to receive higher education in Latvia would benefit themselves by learning Latvian (Hogan-Brun, 2006).

It took three readings of this law to pass in the Latvian Parliament. The law was also deemed acceptable by the European Union and OSCE. Still, many minority language speakers have pointed to its ambiguousness and how "certain government officials could interpret the law to suit their needs" as obvious flaws in the law (Djaéckova , 2003). This has led many Russians in Latvia to appeal to the European Union and demand minority rights. They wanted Latvia to ratify the Council of Europe Framework Convention on minority rights agreement. The Russian government at this time was also putting pressure on the European Union to have Latvia sign this agreement. This only created more ethnic tension between Latvians and ethnic minorities (Hogan-Brun, 2006). Latvia did eventually sign the agreement, but like the education law, it was also highly ambiguous and subject to multiple interpretations.

The next two sections discuss how the new education law has changed ethnic Russian minority schools, and how older Latvian Russians are learning the Latvian language to achieve Latvian citizenship.

### **Education in Secondary Schools**

Starting in the 1990s, many ethnic minority schools were given funding and support by Latvia. Schools where the majority of students are not ethnic Latvians are considered ethnic minority schools in Latvia. These include schools for Poles, Belarusians, Ukrainians, Estonians, Lithuanians, and Jews. These schools had few

problems satisfying the Latvian government's requirements for the amount of Latvian language and culture they were teaching. Russian schools were far more reluctant to change their policies and curriculum to help integrate their students into the new Latvian society (Muižnieks, 2006a). Over the last several years, Russian schools have seen an increase in funding from the Russian government. For example, they have increased the number of textbooks they have sent; in 1998, the Russian government sent about 7,000 books, which they increased to 55,000 books in 2003 (Muižnieks, 2006b). With only one million people in the world speaking the Latvian language, many Russian-speaking students and their parents feel that it is in their best interest to retain their Russian skills for potential employment in Russia. The other language they feel they should learn is English, since it is a language that can be used throughout the European Union and is the language of modern business (Berg, 2007).

The state has insisted in the 60-40 education language law that Russian and minority schools teach more subjects in Latvian. Unfortunately, they have failed to provide the funds for teacher training and curriculum development required to accomplish a transition of this scale. Teachers and administrators working in Russian schools feel that forcing students to learn the core subjects in a language that is not native to them will hinder their acquisition of knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> There is merit to this idea. In Ghana, I taught math and science in English which was the students' second language. I found the students had problems understanding the concepts because they lacked the technical vocabulary required by the subjects. There is an advantage to teaching a core subject in a second language. The students do increase their command and use of that second language causing it to improve. In deciding the best course of action, teachers need to be allowed some degree of flexibility. They should conduct their classes in Latvian, but if students are failing to grasp a concept because of a language problem, the teacher should be allowed to use the students' primary language to help them understand the concept. Knowledge of a subject should come before a student's integration into society.

## **Adult Education**

Adult education in Latvia is comprised of two groups. The first are Russian speakers who want to have a better career and are restricted from a promotion or certain employment sectors because of their lack of Latvian language skills. The other group consists of retired persons who want to receive their citizenship (Djaéckova , 2003). To pass the test, the majority of Russian speakers have to learn Latvian through some form of a language class. This can be done in a variety of ways, the most common being by a paid tutor or through a language club. Private tutors cost money, which is why unemployed workers tend to go to free or lower priced language courses offered by the government (Djaéckova , 2003).

There is not a lack of people who want to take government financed classes to help them pass the language test and find a job. "For example, in Daugavpils, at the end of 2001, there were 700 unemployed persons on the waiting list for the language courses, but only 15 persons were accepted each month" (Djaéckova , 2003, 64). The state has provided some funding for language lessons and services but it has not been enough compared with the demand. Also, there is a lack of funding for the number of lessons people want (40 lessons are typical but people would like 60 and even some people want 100-120 lessons). Participants in the language courses feel that the more lessons they have the better they will learn Latvian (Djaéckova , 2003). Even the people who can afford the language courses, which are geared for the language exam, complain that these classes do not help them with their conversational language skills.

They can pass the test when they finish, but it will not help them get over the psychological barrier of speaking Latvian with native speakers (Djaéckova , 2003). These types of language courses increase one's likelihood of passing the exam. By 2002, a little over half of the Russian-speaking working population had passed Latvia's state language test. Of those who had taken the test "only 0.3% had failed" (Djaéckova , 2003). This suggests that the language exam is quite passable, if a person can spend the time and is able to attend a language course.

In general, there are different reasons people invest the time to learn a second language. Some languages are helpful in certain careers and some are common languages throughout the world which are useful to know in international travel and business. Also,"those who have voluntarily migrated (to a country) have greater motivation to learn a language than those who live in countries undergoing changes in the political system" (Djaéckova , 2003, 12). Djaéckova (2003) argues that if the Latvian government wants to motivate its Russian speaking residents to learn Latvian, it might be wise to stress the advantages of learning the language, like becoming part of a common society and better employment opportunities than by stressing Latvian language preservation.

It must also take into consideration that certain parts of Latvia with high concentrations of ethnic minorities have less need or desire to learn Latvian. If a person is not exposed to the language or does not need it for their profession there is less likelihood that they will take the time and effort to learn the language. One foreseeable problem after Latvia has joined the European Union will be a lack of

governmental funding for Latvian language courses to help non-citizens pass the language tests (Djaéckova , 2003). With less governmental financed language programs, fewer people will be able to afford language classes and pass the test.

The 1989 census recorded that 62.3% of people living in Latvia could speak Latvian; for 20% of this group Latvian was not their first language. Eleven years later, in 2000, 81.7% of the residents of Latvia spoke Latvian. This includes 58% of the Russians living there (Djaéckova , 2003). The increase in Latvian speakers, especially among the ethnic Russians, shows that more people are learning Latvian, thus acquiring the tools to integrate and form a common society.

## **Conclusion**

Russians and Latvians have had a long and intertwined history in the region. Both sides have taken their turn at power at one time or another. The Russian population was considered the ruling class before the first Latvian independence and again after the Soviet takeover. Latvians have been in charge during the first independence period and when Latvia regained its independence. During Latvia's Soviet period, Russians were encouraged by the Soviet government to move to Latvia, which increased Latvia's Russian population to over a third of the total population. This influx of Russians in Latvia drastically changed the ethnic demographics of the area and led to ethnic problems when Latvia regained independence.

After Latvia regained its independence, its government passed several citizenship laws. These laws required the majority of Latvian Russians to take a language test to become citizens of Latvia. The Latvian government thought this would encourage Latvian Russians to leave Latvia and return to Russia. Instead, the majority of Russians have stayed in Latvia. Many have passed the language test and become citizens. Also, many have intermarried with the Latvian population.

The following chapter begins by describing the Latvian media. It examines the types of news sources available and the languages each source is in. The second part of the chapter examines the methodology that was used in the discourse analysis. This section includes other discourse analysis studies that I used to develop my methodology. Also, the news sources that were used in the discourse analysis will be discussed.

## **Chapter 3: Latvian Media and Methodology**

### **Latvian Media**

The Latvian print media market is divided into two main audiences, one that speaks Russian and one that speaks Latvian. This is the historical result of Soviet occupation (Mozers, 2006). During Latvia's Soviet period, the Russian print media increased due to financing from Moscow. The Soviet government wished to Russify the region under one language and culture. As a result, today, Latvia has a large number of newspapers that are printed in Russian and Latvian for a country of its relatively small physical size and population:

In 2004, there were 118 local newspapers in Latvia that were published in Latvian. Their total circulation amounted to 33.4 million copies. There were also 20 local newspapers in Russian, and their circulation was around 9.5 million copies. There was one newspaper published both in Latvian and in Russian, and its circulation was 387,600 copies (Brikše & Zelče, 2006, 82-83).

With only one newspaper in Latvia being written in Latvian and Russian, the two different ethnic groups tend to get their news from different sources, with different political agendas and perspectives. Division between Latvian Russians and Latvians might be created by printing stories that favor one group over another. This one-sidedness tends to separate the different ethnic groups instead of bringing them together. This is not the case with the Latvian public broadcast media which is known for airing stories that strike a cord with both Latvian and Russian speakers, bringing the two groups together. Also, the Latvian public broadcast media present their broadcasts in both Russian and Latvian, so as not to exclude either group (Šulmane, 2006).

One factor which has led to an ethnic bias in Latvian print media coverage is the lack of transparency in print media ownership. Widespread rumors suggest that many of the Russian language newspapers receive funding from Russia (Šulmane, 2006). Also, it has been claimed that the Russian embassy in Riga influences the material and opinions of the Latvian-Russian print media (Šulmane, 2006). This allows Russia to run stories that have the potential to create discord among the two ethnic groups, and undermines the Latvian government's attempt to create a more positive dialogue which would help the different groups work together and integrate (Mozers, 2006).

Even if the Russian government is not controlling parts of the Russian newspapers in Latvia, it still has the ability to influence world opinion of Latvia by what it prints in its own newspapers. Latvia is a smaller and less powerful country than Russia with little voice on the world stage. Information about this region of the world is often taken from a Russian source or seen through a Russian perspective. Russia is able to present information about the region in a way that will be beneficial to its goals. An example of this is how the Russian media in Latvia and in Russia exaggerated the Russian student protests of the 60/40 language law in Latvia. Almost all of the international media correspondents are based out of Moscow, which means they obtain their information from Russian sources. This type of slanted coverage forced the European Union and NATO to investigate the state of Latvia's Russian population. If Latvia had been found guilty of discriminating against its Russian population, it might have jeopardized their bid to join both organizations. The

Russian government uses the plight of the Latvian Russians as a cover for its attempt to ruin Latvia's bid to the European Union and NATO (Mosers, 2006). With a larger share of the world media, Russia can shape the views of both the people inside its borders who are heavily influenced by its media, and a large portion of the outside world (Lulle, 2006).

Another factor that has led to a bias in print media coverage in Latvia is the lack of "a unified code of ethics" or the ability of the Latvian Union of Journalists to step in and regulate what is printed in the country (Šulmane, 2006). A code of ethics would hold journalist responsible for the material they submit, and in theory, ensure that they strive to report fair and accurate results, along with eliminating distortion and bias from their work. Most Latvian-Russian journalists do not feel the need for either regulatory measure, whereas the ethnic Latvian journalists are more divided. Some Latvian journalists feel there should be some regulation, while others are against regulation (Šulmane, 2006). Latvian Russian journalists tend to see regulations and ethics as rules that get in the way of their writing. They see themselves as emotional writers who prefer to interpret the news, and do "not always find it necessary to separate news from opinion" (Šulmane, 2006, 67).

## **Methodology**

The research portion of this thesis is a discourse analysis of print media focusing on the ethnic Russian population in Latvia. Discourse analysis in the social sciences is based on the work of Michel Foucault, a French philosopher (Waitt, 2005,

Richardson, 2007). It is generally accepted that human beings can never be fully unbiased. This being the case, discourses which are constructed by people will also possess biases. These biases go much deeper than the words printed on a newspaper's page. Through their readers, newspapers have a huge influence on society. They sway the opinions of their readers by choosing what stories they run, how they present their information, and the amount of coverage they give to a particular viewpoint. Discourse analysis is concerned with who has the power in the media, be it a government or the individuals who run the newspaper, and their potential to influence the public to accept their point of view (O'Tuathail & Agnew 1992, Waitt, 2005).

Society, which is composed of a newspaper's readers, can also influence what is printed. If people stop buying a certain paper because they distrust it or do not like the type of stories it prints, then that paper will have a limited influence or may even cease to exist. The way a newspaper makes money and survives is by selling newspapers. So the preference of society is crucial. If people are looking for entertainment, facts and concrete journalism end up taking a back seat to more interesting and glamorous stories. Society not only influences what is printed in newspapers, but is also changed by the news that is printed (Richardson, 2007).

Usually, the process of discourse analysis involves looking at a number of articles for an extended period of time. Examining only one article will not demonstrate how a newspaper affects society. Instead, one must study many texts over a period of time to discover common trends; this process is also called intertextuality (Waitt, 2005). The number and kinds of texts involved in a particular

discourse analysis varies according to the research. Waitt (2005) stressed the fact that there is no “one” set way of doing discourse analysis. Instead, researchers should be consistent in their approach while also documenting their procedures well and the reasons behind the procedures they chose (Waitt, 2005). Lack of universal methodology and a researcher’s subjectivity places discourse analysis in the realm of qualitative analysis. To obtain some degree of quantitative analysis and repeatability, several techniques can be employed in discourse analysis studies. One such method is the coding of text. This involves counting the number of times a particular word or theme is used in a group of articles. This pinpoints key themes or phrases that are common among the articles (Waitt, 2005, Richardson, 2007). Coding is the discourse analysis method I chose, because I wanted to understand and document the issues different newspapers thought were important in regard to Latvian Russians.

In this project, I draw from several examples of research that have used this method, including some published articles and theses. An article by Myers et al. (1996) and a thesis by Potter (2006) both took a similar approach to discourse analysis in their research. Myers et al. (1996) looked for key words or themes in major American newspapers, focusing on the conflicts in Bosnia and Rwanda during the early 1990s. They found that American newspapers covered the Bosnian conflict more than the conflict in Rwanda. Also, the newspapers represented the Bosnian conflict as being an “ethnic genocide” while portraying the conflict in Rwanda as a “tribal war” because one occurred in Europe and the other in Africa. Potter (2006) also looked for key words or themes in major American newspapers but focused her

research on how the United States portrayed Haiti's identity. Both of these projects used a computer database to search newspaper articles for the keyword or theme they were looking for. This approach, I felt would not work well for my subject matter because I was looking for broader themes rather than specific keywords. Also, both sources used newspapers from the United States that were originally printed in English. The sources I looked at were translated into English from another language. This might affect the word choice in an article due to the preferences of the translator.

Hungerford (2007) also did a discourse analysis, though it was a manual search. Her research was based on Onitisha market literature which was not digitized in a searchable database. Instead, she read a sample of the literature and picked out key themes from the writings. I decided that a combination of these two approaches would work best for my research. To obtain the articles, I used a keyword search on a database, and for the actual discourse analysis I searched the articles manually for specific themes.

The East View Universal Databases accessed from the University of Kansas libraries internet site was the database I used to obtain articles written about Latvian-Russians. This database provides full text articles for several of the major Russian, Central Asian, Caucasus, and Baltic newspapers. I used the search topic "Latvian Russians" OR "Ethnic Russians" to locate suitable articles. The term "Ethnic Russians" also brought up many articles about ethnic Russians in Latvia. Additionally it listed articles about ethnic Russians in other countries like Kazakhstan. To distinguish whether or not the articles were about Latvian Russians in Latvia required

reading the headlines and sometimes the entire article. I searched a six-year time span beginning January 2002 to December 2007. Latvia joined the European Union in the spring of 2004. By choosing the time period that I did, I felt that it would give me a good perspective of articles before and after Latvia joined the European Union.

ITAR-TASS and The Baltic Times were the two news sources that I used for the main part of the discourse analysis. ITAR-TASS is a daily collection of news wire stories from one of the world's largest news service. Based out of Moscow, ITAR-TASS has been operating since 1904. Stories and news bulletins are released in six different languages, English being one (ITAR-TASS Today, 2008).

The Baltic Times is a weekly English language publication out of Riga. It focuses mainly on the politics and economics of the Baltic region. Steve Roman, Editor-and-Chief of The Baltic Times, describes their target audience as "the ex-pat community" in the three Baltic countries, many business people, academics, and diplomats. Also, he says that a lot of the Baltic diaspora living in the United States of America, Canada, and other countries read the internet version of the publication to keep up with what is happening in the region. The last major market is what he terms "Baltic Watchers", foreign policy makers in the European Union or businessmen working for investment houses or businesses in the region (Roman, 2008).

I chose to work with these two publications because both were written in English, and one would have a more Baltic perspective, while the other one has a more Russian perspective of the issues. After performing the search on the East View Universal Databases, 190 articles were discovered for the six-year period, 119 from

ITAR-TASS and 71 from The Baltic Times. Reading the articles, I found that ITAR-TASS was slanted far more to the Russian side of the issues, whereas The Baltic Times did take a Baltic stance on some issues, but it was by far more neutral, usually presenting both sides of an issue.

Originally, I wanted to find a news service that was Baltic in origin, similar to how ITAR-TASS is Russian in origin and use it instead of The Baltic Times. The University of Kansas Slavic librarians suggested the Baltic News Service as a news agency based in the Baltic region. The Baltic News Service is the largest news organization in the Baltic States with 1,000 news stories released daily. It provides stories in the three major Baltic languages, Russian, and English (Welcome to Baltic News Service, 2008). Unfortunately, the Baltic News Service was not available through the East View universal database. Instead, I had to access it through another electronic database (LexisNexis academic), which created problems with my search terms. The database would cut the “s” off “Latvian Russians” after which the results would be mainly about the Latvian Russian border not about Latvian Russians. Also, the database would put multiple articles on one page, so one article might contain the word “Latvian” and a totally different article would contain the word “Russian”. Since I wanted to get a more Baltic perspective, I did use the Baltic News Service to supplement my main search with ITAR-TASS and The Baltic Times. However, I decided that I would not use it as a primary source.

After collecting the articles, I began to categorize them by themes. The themes were chosen from the articles themselves; several articles had more than one theme.

Examples of themes included “Protection of the Rights of Ethnic Russians”, “Human Rights” and “Interpreting History Differently”. Some themes like “Protection of the Rights of Ethnic Russians” were broader. The article might directly state that phrase or it might talk about protecting voting rights or Russian schools. Other categories like “Human Rights” were taken directly from the articles; if an article directly said “human rights” I would put it in that category. The last type of category was a type that had a general theme but did not necessarily state the phrase. An example of this was the category called “Interpreting History Differently.” Several articles talked about events held in Latvia by different ethnic groups protesting different holidays. There was a common theme here about different ethnic groups interpreting history differently, but it was never stated in the articles.

When themes had been assigned to all the articles, I started looking at the data as it related back to the general identity and geopolitical theories. It was difficult to distinguish any trends because of the different structures of the articles. Some articles would give a geopolitical perspective, looking at the issue of Latvian-Russians from an external or international view. The articles were structured on the Russian government’s response to some incident, or a European Union committee report, or even President Bush’s visit to Riga. These articles did not go into much depth or detail about Latvian-Russians. Instead, the main parties of the article (Russian government, EU, Latvian government) used them as a platform to support or denounce some foreign international policy or some internal Latvian governmental policy.

The other main structure was internally based. These were articles that examined what was happening to Latvian-Russians in Latvia. These articles focused mainly on what they did, and the problems they were having inside Latvia. These articles generally did not refer to an outside government or organization, and if they did it was very briefly and not the main idea or focus of the article. These articles also seemed to focus more on identity issues.

Dividing the articles on their basic structure as either externally or internally based seemed like a logical step, since they relate to the two main types of theories I was examining. Of the total, 113 articles fell into the externally based category and 77 articles into the internally based category. By separating the articles into these structural categories, it helped distinguish dominant themes and made differences between The Baltic Times and ITAR-TASS Daily coverage easier to see.

Both the internally and externally based articles contained similar themes. The major difference was the “Geopolitical” category of themes which was dominated by externally based articles and the “Protesting” category which was dominated by internally based articles. Themes within the “Geopolitical” category consisted of “Border Agreement”, “Russian Economic Sanctions against Latvia”, and “Latvian Russian Migration/Either to Russia or west”. The “Protesting” category included themes like “Protesting – General” and “Protesting – Education Reforms”.

The following chapter contains the results of the newspaper analysis, followed by a discourse analysis of the results. The chapter is broken up into two parts. The first examines the issues and articles during the months that produced the most

articles. The second section examines the main themes presented in the articles during the six-year time period.

## **Chapter 4: Results and Discussion**

Listening and giving voice to different points of view are essential to the precepts of reasoned discourse: disregarding other viewpoints diminishes the effect of reason in any age (Sack, 1997, 4).

As Sack states above, it is important to look at an issue from multiple viewpoints. This strategy allows one to understand the issue better and make more informed decisions. Keeping Sack's point of view in mind, I decided to look at the issues of Latvian Russians from two different perspectives. The first perspective came from ITAR-TASS which presents a discourse from the Russian government's point of view. They side more with the Latvian Russian population because they view them as fellow countrymen who are being mistreated by a Western government. The other perspective comes from The Baltic Times which provides a more Western point of view. The Baltic Times is written for businessmen and foreign embassy personnel. It provides a perspective that looks at the Latvian Russian issue from a different point of view. Examining two different news sources allows for a more complete discourse with regard to the issues of Latvian Russians.

In the previous chapter, the methodology used in the newspaper discourse analysis was discussed. Articles from ITAR-TASS and The Baltic Times were collected for a six-year period from January 2002 to December 2007. The months that received the most news coverage were then supplemented with additional news stories from The Baltic News Service. This chapter will present the results of the analysis with a discussion of those results. The chapter is divided into two separate sections. The first section will analyze the number of articles by publication, per

month, while the second section will examine the main themes used by the articles in this six-year period. This first type of analysis is useful in determining the time periods when issues concerning Latvian Russians were reported the most and to see which events might have triggered the rise in news stories. Correlating events and news stories tells us how different news sources cover the same event. Different news sources will portray the same story differently to suit the interests of their audience. If a news source constantly runs stories that its audience disagrees with, then the news source runs the risk of upsetting its audience who may leave it for a more agreeable news source. This fear of losing its audience leads news sources to cover the news in a way that will be appealing to its audience, though it might not be completely truthful. If the three news sources cover the issues of Latvian Russians similarly then they, and essentially their readers, are in agreement on how to solve these issues. If there is instead disagreement among the news sources about the issues of Latvian Russians then this might be seen as a source of contention which can lead to tension and misunderstandings between the different ethnic groups in the future.

The next section will contain the results of the second analysis. It will examine the main themes presented in The Baltic Times and ITAR-TASS during the six-year time period from January 2002 to December 2007. This analysis will show whether or not both news sources presented similar Latvian Russian themes or if they varied in their coverage of Latvian Russians. It is useful to analyze whether a news source stressed certain issues over others when compared to another news source because it gives an idea of each news source's long term agenda. A news source will

stress the issues and ideas that it feels are important to its readers, while disregarding the issues and ideas that cast its readers in a negative light. Examining these themes gives a basic idea of what issues and ideas a news source exposes its reader to, compared to another news source. The more complete the coverage of an issue, the more informed the readers are which allows them to make better decisions.

### **Results – Number of Articles per Month for each Source**

Two news sources were used to complete this analysis: The Baltic Times and ITAR-TASS. The Baltic Times is based out of Riga, Latvia and is written for embassy personnel and business people, not for the local population. Since it is not written for the local population, it is not written with either a Latvian or Russian perspective towards issues. Instead it looks at the issues from a third party perspective which allows it to look at the issues in the region from an outside perspective. ITAR-TASS is a Russian news service that is based out of Moscow, Russia. It is a regular news service that distributes stories to newspapers located within and outside of Russia. ITAR-TASS presents the issues of Latvian Russians from a Russian perspective. Its intended audience is the Russian population but it is also read outside the region as a major Russian news source.

The main analysis was supplemented by articles from The Baltic News Service which is located in Tallinn, Estonia. It is a news wire service providing articles for newspapers in the region and foreign news services. The main audience of

the Baltic News Service is the people of the Baltic Region. Their main objective is to inform the local Baltic population of events that pertain to their region.

Appendix 1 shows the number of news articles per month for The Baltic Times and ITAR-TASS that pertain to Latvian Russians. Appendix 2 is a similar graph, dividing the articles by main theme instead of by news source. When looking at both graphs, we can see that during the months of October 2002, December 2002, March 2003, September 2004, March 2005, December 2005 and September 2007 the most articles pertaining to Latvian Russians were published. Next, I will discuss major events that occurred during these months and describe the main topics covered by the news sources. Following each newspaper analysis will be a short discourse analysis over each major event.

### **October 2002**

The first major peak in articles occurred in October 2002. Of the ten articles published for this month, nine of them were written by ITAR-TASS. The high number of articles for the month is explained by two major events. The first event concerns some negative comments about Latvian Russians made by the President of Latvia, Vaira Vike-Freiberga. She made the comments in an interview with a local paper early in the month. The other main event concerns Latvia's bids to join the European Union and NATO. Since Latvia reestablished its independence, it has been courting the idea of joining these two western organizations.

The first event about the Latvian President's negative comments about ethnic Russians in Latvia was only included in the articles published by ITAR-TASS. Titles

of these articles include “Latvian president statement on citizenship defies world practice” and “Non-citizens in Latvia should get naturalized or leave.” ITAR-TASS reported that the President of Latvia said that the Latvian language was the only official language of Latvia, and that if the Russian population did not want to learn Latvian they should leave the country (Non-citizens in Latvia should get naturalized or leave, 2002). This topic was only broached by ITAR-TASS, and I did not find any similar articles in The Baltic Times or the Baltic News Service.

By printing these stories, ITAR-TASS portrays Latvia and its President as not being friendly to ethnic minorities. The President’s comments might also be used to create tension between Russians and Latvians by creating an unfriendly environment for ethnic Russians. At this time Russia is experiencing a negative population growth. Stories like these have the potential of dissuading Russians in Russia from leaving or encouraging Latvian Russians to return to Russia because it paints Latvia and other Western countries as being unfriendly to Russians. The reason that I did not find any similar stories in The Baltic Times or The Baltic News Service might be because they either felt that the story was not newsworthy or they decided not to print it because it was deemed embarrassing to the President and Latvia. A story like this casts a negative image upon the country by not being sensitive to ethnic minorities.

The other main topic of interest addressed during October 2002 pertained to Latvia joining the European Union and NATO. On this issue, ITAR-TASS released an article called “Latvia is serious candidate for joining NATO, Burns says”. At the time, Nicolas Burns was a U.S. official helping President Bush to decide if he should

recommend Latvia and the other Baltic Republics for NATO membership. The article discusses how Burns thought that improving the state of non-Latvian speakers in the country would help Latvia with their NATO bid. The Baltic Times' one article for the month "NEWS: Reports open EU door wider" covers the topic of Latvia's potential bid for EU membership. The article indicated that Latvia had done well to remove some barriers to Latvian Russian naturalization, but the government needed to increase the rate of naturalization and spend more money on naturalization programs (NESW. Reports open EU door wider, 2002). Both the ITAR-TASS and The Baltic Times articles about Latvia's potential for joining the European Union and NATO are similar, yet have some relevant differences. The ITAR-TASS article uses quotes from a high ranking U.S. official to say that Latvia needs to improve its treatment of its Russians if it wants to join NATO. The Russian publication stresses the treatment of these Russians, instead of saying that they should become naturalized citizens and integrate into Latvian society. The Baltic Times article says that Latvia needs to do a better job naturalizing its Russian population. This publication concentrates more on integrating Russians into Latvia rather than on their basic treatment.

Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania are the first of the former Soviet republics to begin talks to become members of these pro-western organizations. From a Russian point of view, this might be seen as losing control over former territory and the erosion of its buffer zone between itself and the West. By continuously printing stories about the mistreatment of Latvia's minorities, Russia hopes to keep these issues at the forefront while the European Union and NATO are considering Latvia

for membership. Mistreatment of Latvia's minorities might slow down or hamper Latvia's bids for membership which would prevent the West from moving closer to Russian territory.

Searching for similarly themed articles in the Baltic News Service produced few articles about Latvian Russians and none similar to these two subjects. They did have an article, "Soros supports developing bilingual community in Latvia", that mentions Latvia and the European Union but that theme is not the main point of the article. Instead, the article tells how George Soros believes that the Latvian language is not in any real danger of disappearing and that Russian should also be given official language status. He also argued that the Latvian government should start treating Latvian Russians as equals.

### **December 2003**

The next major peak in articles came in December 2003 and January 2004. During this time, proposed education reforms were being discussed and voted on in the Latvian Parliament. The proposed education reforms involved the 60/40 language law. This law targeted the amount of Russian language instruction in Russian schools located in Latvia. If the law passed, schools would have to teach at least 60% of the courses, not counting Latvian language training, in the Latvian language, while 40% of classes could be taught in a different language. This law has caused many Latvian Russians to protest its implementation because it might lead to a decrease in the students' Russian language skills.

Many of the articles during this time dealt with student protests and demonstrations over the proposed 60/40 language law. The most descriptive stories were released by The Baltic Times and the Baltic News Service. They related how someone set fire to the door of the Education Ministry in response to the proposed 60/40 language law. After reading the Baltic News Service article, “Latvian Minister says arson was prompted by Russian-speakers’ anti education reform campaign”, one might be led to the belief that all Russian protestors are vandals with no concern for state property or personal safety. The article claimed that Latvian Russians set fire to the door without giving an alternative view with comments from the accused. The Baltic Times’ article, “Radicals set fire to ministry door”, did provide additional comments from the Russian School Protection Headquarters organization and the Latvian Russian School Protection Association. These two organizations denounced the vandalism in The Baltic Times article, but in the Baltic News Service article were accused by the education minister of instigating the event. If the Baltic News Service had printed that these two Russian organizations had denounced the vandalism, it could not cast all Latvian Russians as trouble-makers bent on civil disobedience. This negative portrayal of Russians probably explains why a similar story about the ministry’s door being set on fire did not appear in ITAR-TASS.

Presenting the arson issue differently sheds some light on the different discourses The Baltic Times and the Baltic News Service are proffering. The Baltic Times is read by Western embassy personnel and foreign businessmen. Its readers work and do business in the region. To do their jobs properly, they need to get clear

and accurate news that presents both sides of the issues objectively. Foreign governments must look past ethnic lines when dealing with other governments to avoid offending them and disrupting communication lines. This perspective is quite different than the one used by the Baltic News Service which is written for the local population. This publication is run by citizens of the Baltic countries who are going to back their leaders over foreign ones. The discourse they present for the vandalism of the Education Ministry's door only serves to benefit the Latvian Education Ministry because it discredits the issues of Latvian Russians by representing them as uncivilized vandals. It strengthens the Latvian government's position that all Latvian Russians do not belong in Latvian society and should go back to Russia.

Besides the issue of vandals setting fire to the door of the Education Ministry, The Baltic News Service also ran two in-depth articles about Russian student protests. These articles were entitled, "More than 1,000 school students protest against education reform in Latvia" and "Hundreds of loud protesters challenge Minority education reform outside Latvian (part I)". The education minister, who was not in Riga during the protests, commented that he did not have to discuss the policy with the Russian protestors because these students would probably be drunk and fighting in the street (More than 1,000 school students protest against education reform in Riga, 2004). This reporting implies that Latvian Russians are uncivilized and unworthy of being taken seriously. At this time, ITAR-TASS did not print any articles about this large student protest. It could be that The Baltic News Service had reported it correctly, and the Latvian Russians were being disorderly. Protests where Russians

do not conduct themselves responsibly is not good press coverage for Latvian Russians. ITAR-TASS might have steered clear of this story because of its negative portrayal of Russians. These stories also suggest that unless the Latvian Russians' demands are met there might be trouble within the country. If the Latvian Russians continue to misbehave during protests, the Latvian government might use this as grounds for deporting Latvian Russian non-citizens.

Governments encourage stories that put themselves and their views in a positive light. By not covering events that might cause embarrassment to their government, news sources hide part of the story which affects their readers' opinions. When Latvian Russians misbehave during protests, it only justifies the Latvian governments' view that the Latvian Russian population is uncivilized and should leave Latvia and return to Russia. Like the previous peak, if a story is likely to cause embarrassment to their government or ethnic group a news source is less likely to run it. If they do run it, they downplay the events in order to make them seem less important which takes away part of the damage caused by the event.

### **March 2004**

March 2004 recorded the largest total of articles for any month. During this time period, twelve articles were published and ITAR-TASS released nine of those articles. Even though this month contained the most articles for the researched time period there were not many common themes or issues among the articles. Most of the articles dealt with separate and unrelated issues, with one exception. The event that received the most press coverage centered on the OSCE (Organization for Security

and Co-operation in Europe) visit to Moscow. This organization provides a forum of discussion between countries to prevent potential conflicts. In Moscow, the state of the Latvian Russian minority was discussed with the Russian government. The Russian government emphasized to the OSCE concerns it had about the lack of minority rights for Latvian Russians.

All three news sources presented the information similarly. They stated that if the OSCE commission found any gross violations to ethnic minority rights in Latvia, it could slow down or stop Latvia's European Union accession. This similarity among the news sources is not surprising because these are preliminary articles to alert their readers of a possible future result. All three news sources had decided that this issue was newsworthy, but each wished for a different future outcome. The Baltic News Service printed an article on this event because they wanted to promote the view that the OSCE commission would not find any violations, thus showing the world how ungrounded the Russian accusations were. ITAR-TASS may have been motivated to print a story because having the OSCE commission in Latvia made Latvia look less democratic. Also if the commission did find evidence of human rights violations in Latvia it would work to justify the Russians' arguments about the lack of rights for Latvian Russians which might slow or prevent Latvia's EU membership. During this time, The Baltic News Service had an interesting article entitled, "Russian School Protests an Attempt to Obstruct Latvia's EU Accession: Latvian President" that suggested that Latvian Russians were trying to slow Latvia's EU membership. This

article argued that Russian protesters were working for Moscow to try and prevent Latvia from being allowed into the European Union.

Several discourses might be taken from each news sources' perspective of the OSCE's visit to Moscow. Russia does not want Latvia and the other Baltic Republics to join the European Union because Russia might lose more of its control over Eastern Europe. Also, by putting the spotlight on Latvia's potential ethnic rights violations it distracts from its own. This includes Chechnya. In contrast, the Latvian government insists that there are no ethnic rights violations. Russia, it feels, is trying to undermine its bid for the European Union by encouraging negative ethnic relations between the Latvian and Russian ethnic groups. After which, Russia can tarnish Latvia's reputation by alerting the world to these ethnic violations.

#### **September 2004**

Of the six articles collected for September 2004, ITAR-TASS published five of them. All of the articles except one centered on internal issues concerning the implementation of the 60/40 education law. The 60/40 education law had passed parliament and became law in January 2004, but it did not go into effect until September 2004 with the beginning of the new school year.

ITAR-TASS published articles like "Latvian premier: School reform to be effected in Latvia", "Latvia to extradite active opponent to school reform", and "Russia expects EU help to provision of Latvian Russians' rights". In all of the articles, ITAR-TASS wrote that the education laws the Latvian government had been implementing were unfair to minority groups and against European Union policy.

They also wrote how students were protesting the laws by going on hunger strikes and refusing to go to school (Russia expects EU help to provision of Latvian Russians' rights, 2004). The Baltic Times portrayed the events of the student protests much differently in their article, "NEWS – Government tries to rock students out of protesting mood". The article states that the Latvian Education Ministry put on a rock concert featuring a Russian band to draw Russian students away from their protests. The article also mentions the hunger strikes, but unlike ITAR-TASS, it mentions that only six students participated. The Baltic News Service actually provided less coverage than The Baltic Times. After doing multiple searches on LexisNexis Academia, the only article I could find relating to protests at Russian schools for September 2004 was one about Estonian Russians protesting the Latvian education policy in Tallinn, Estonia (Picket in Support of Latvia's Russian Schools Staged in Estonian Capital, 2004). The Baltic News Service did not print any articles that directly referred to the protests that took place in Riga.

The difference in perspectives among the three news services was quite evident. ITAR-TASS over-reported this issue compared to the other news services. This might be because it was a protest where Latvian Russians represented themselves well. They contained their emotions and held a proper demonstration without vandalizing property or causing riots. The Baltic News Service underrepresented the issue because the Latvian Russians did behave themselves during the protest and covering demonstrations in full would give justification to the Latvian Russian cause. The Baltic Times covered the demonstrations with little bias,

reporting the facts while not overstating them. They also provided an amount of coverage allowing their readers (embassy personnel and foreign businessmen) in the region to receive a more or less balanced perspective that would allow them to make accurate and informed decisions.

### **March 2005**

March 2005 did not show a common theme among the articles. The Baltic Times provided five articles, while ITAR-TASS provided two. Titles varied from “Latvia’s parliament rejects European convention on minority rights” to the announcement of President Bush’s visit later that year. The Baltic News Service had similar articles about Bush’s planned visit and about Russia trying to get the United Nations involved with human rights issues concerning Latvian Russians. The peak during this month appears to be just a coincidence, with articles not showing a common trend due to a specific event.

### **December 2005**

The next big peak in articles came in December 2005. There were a total of six articles on Russian Latvians. One of the articles was posted by The Baltic Times, while ITAR-TASS posted five articles. During this month, the Latvian State Language Center decided to require a Latvian language test for all Russian students. This test was to see if Russian students were learning the language. Students would be required to pass the test in addition to completing courses at school in the Latvian language. Another major event during this month involved a speech giving by Russian President Vladimir Putin urging Latvian Russians to move to Kaliningrad.

Occasionally, during the years analyzed, the Russian government would invite Baltic Russians to settle in Kaliningrad which has experienced a decrease in life expectancy and net migration since the early 1990's. This region of Russia is cut off from the rest of Russia, situated between Lithuania and Poland. The last prominent event during the month was Russia's continuing pleas with the European Union to ensure Latvian Russians' rights.

In December 2005, the ITAR-TASS articles focused on the new Latvian language tests for Russian students, and the Russian government pleading with the European Union to guarantee Latvian Russian rights. Some examples of the article titles during this time were "Mass language tests for Russian-speaking students in Latvia," and "Russia urges EU to pay attention to Russians' rights in Baltics". The last article focused on the Russian Prime Minister, Mikhail Fradkov's, comments about how he thought the Latvian government's policy of non-citizenship was contrary to European principles. The Baltic News Service did have an article similar to this last ITAR-TASS article called, "Russia, EU divided over Baltic States' Russian-Speakers". In their article, The Baltic News Service argued that the non-citizen status existed in European Union countries like Germany, not just in Latvia and Estonia.

The Russian government is basing its argument to the European Union on the Latvian government withholding citizenship to residents of Latvia. The Latvian government countered this argument by saying that other European Union countries also had non-citizens living in them. This presents a difficult problem for the European Union. If they allow Latvia entrance into the European Union, they would

do so knowing that Latvia denied part of its population citizenship. If the European Union feels that there is a problem in Latvia, then they must reexamine some of its members who are also home to non-citizens.

The only Baltic Times article for December 2005, "News Lithuania- Putin supports calls for Baltic Russians to move to Kaliningrad" spoke about how Putin wanted ethnic Russians in the Baltic countries to relocate to Russia's Kaliningrad region. The article goes on to say that many politicians in Latvia supported the idea of Latvian Russians leaving Latvia and relocating to Kaliningrad.

This proposal to relocate Latvian Russians to Kaliningrad seems like a possible solution that both the Russian and Latvian governments might like. In reality though, it has many problems and the Latvian Russians do not see it as a realistic solution. Many Russian politicians understand that Baltic Russians have no real desire to return to Russia because of the lower standard of living and fewer job opportunities. They believe that Kaliningrad could be a compromise. These ethnic Russians would still be living in Russian territory but it would be located in the West and could serve as a bridge between Russia and Europe. Russia would like to have these ethnic Russians living within its borders to help with the population decline, while Latvia's government would like to be rid of some of their Russian population to ensure a Latvian majority. By occasionally bringing up this idea, these governments keep it as a possible solution even though they know it is not viable.

Another Baltic News Service article that I found during this month was "Moscow Won't let Baltic Russians' issue Fade". This article expressed how Russia

persistently brings up minority rights for ethnic Russians in the Baltics to the European Union. By phrasing the article like this, the Baltic News Service tried to draw the reader's attention away from the issues concerning Latvian Russians that Russia keeps bringing up, and instead tried to portray Russia as a "tattletale" who is constantly trying to get their innocent neighbor into trouble.

### **September 2007**

The last high period for articles about Latvian Russians occurred in September 2007 with a total of seven articles. All but two of the articles during this month were ITAR-TASS articles. The main event during this month was the signing of the Russian-Latvian Border Treaty. Since Latvia regained independence, it and Russia have been under pressure by international organizations to sign a treaty demarcating their shared border. Russia has been reluctant to sign the treaty and had tried to use it to force the Latvian government to give Latvian Russians more rights.

The signing of the treaty was the main theme in several of the articles like "Border treaty to help solve problems of ethnic Russians" and "Ratified treaty may better ethnic Russians situation in Latvia". Both of these articles were from ITAR-TASS. The articles were worded to leave the impression that the Russian government was concerned about the ethnic Russian population in Latvia and the border treaty hinged on that issue. The articles said that Russia would not agree to the treaty unless Latvian Russians received citizenship. The Baltic News Service also printed an article about the border treaty. However, they did not bring up the issues of Latvian Russians in their coverage. Instead the article focused only on the border treaty between Latvia

and Russia. This type of coverage is typical of articles published by The Baltic News Service which does not tie every issue concerning Russia with Russians living in Latvia. They prefer to keep their readers' attention focused on the issue they are presenting, whereas ITAR-TASS brings up the issues of Latvian Russians in any article about Latvia and its policies. By including Latvian Russians in its coverage, ITAR-TASS reminds its Russian readers about the issues their fellow Russians are facing. Being constantly reminded of their treatment might result in building animosity within the Russian community for the Latvian government and other Western organizations.

The border between Latvia and Russia is a key issue for the European Union and NATO. This border area not only demarcates the border between Russia and Latvia but also between Russia and these two Western organizations. By dragging its feet, Russia is attempting to bring more attention to the lack of rights for Latvian Russians. This continued attention is bad for the image of Latvia and these organizations. It demonstrates the lack of civil rights for non-citizens in areas of the world which are supposed to be the most free and democratic. By ignoring Russia's claim that Latvian Russians are being denied civil rights, Latvia makes the case that Latvian Russians have no bearing on the border treaty. The Latvian government feels that ethnic Russians living within its borders are its business and none of Russia's. If these Latvian Russians do not like their situation within Latvia they are free to move back to Russia.

The other issue during September 2007 occurred when the PACE (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe) President Van der Linden said that the Baltic countries needed to do more to ensure minorities' rights. PACE is a group of member states that meet to discuss various problems in Europe. They try and work out the solutions diplomatically and then make recommendations back to countries involved.

Both ITAR-TASS and The Baltic Times released articles about the comments made by the PACE President: "PACE president urges naturalization of Latvian Russians" and "PACE President Criticizes Baltics on Minority Rights" respectively. This was one of the few times that The Baltic Times and ITAR-TASS shared the same perspective on an issue, due possibly to the respectability of the source. The story supported ITAR-TASS's stand on the Latvian government's treatment of Latvian Russians, while The Baltic Times felt that what the PACE president says on this issue is newsworthy enough to print. This was not the case for The Baltic News Service which failed to print a similar article.

With both The Baltic Times and ITAR-TASS in agreement on this issue, it demonstrates that the embassy community and the Russian government both agree that it is important to listen to international agencies to solve the issues of Latvian Russians. A third party like PACE, is a good way for both Latvia and Russia to resolve issues between them. The agenda of PACE is to create a better Europe where all groups of people are free and not discriminated against. The Latvian government does not want to admit that they might be mistreating Latvian Russians. If they

acknowledged the PACE president's comments then they would be admitting that they might be mistreating its Latvian Russians. The Latvian government appears to take the view that its best policy is not to respond to the accusations.

### **Summary of Results for Number of Articles per Month**

In summary, ITAR-TASS incorporates the issues of Latvian Russians whenever it discusses Russia's foreign policy with Latvia. Examples of this coverage include Latvia's European Union and NATO bids and the Latvian Russian border treaty. ITAR-TASS brings up Latvian Russians in these issues either to point out the flaws of NATO, the European Union, and the government of Latvia, or because they care about the state of their compatriots. It is difficult to tell what their actual motives are, but a plausible rationale would be that they do it to point out the flaws of the Latvian Government and Western institutions, rather than to protect ethnic Russians in other countries. Russia hopes that by exposing Latvia's mistreatment of ethnic minorities it can prevent Latvia from being accepted into the European Union and NATO. If Russia is successful in doing this, it will preserve its border zone between itself and Western Europe and continue its influence in the region. Also, it will restore some of Russia's political power that has been compromised since the end of the Cold War.

The Baltic News Service usually takes the opposite view of ITAR-TASS. This news service is based in the Baltic States and has a pro-western stance. It sees the future of the Baltic countries lying with Europe rather than Russia. Many of the Baltic News Service articles try to counter the Russian government's claims that the Latvian

government is mistreating its ethnic minorities. On several occasions they stress that Russia is exaggerating the situation to use it to their advantage with their relations with Latvia. Instead of addressing the issues Latvian Russians bring up, like the educational reforms, The Baltic News Service tends to dismiss these issues and instead judges the character of Latvian Russians. The Baltic News Service reasons that by showing the bad side of Latvian Russian's character they can discredit the Latvian Russian cause. Why should they give an uncivilized group of people citizenship? Also, in the case of the education law protests in September 2004, the Baltic News Service chose not to cover the issue, which is a way of deeming the event un-newsworthy and thus, unimportant. The government of Latvia has already decided the language question in Latvia and considers covering the protests unnecessary. Russian will not become an official language and citizens must be able to speak the state language. The government feels that if a group is protesting against the language law then that group does not respect Latvian culture and should not become part of the country they are creating.

Unlike ITAR-TASS and the Baltic News Service, The Baltic Times is written for embassy personnel and business people, not for the local population. Their coverage of events seems less biased than the other news sources because The Baltic Times is not controlled or concerned by the opinion of the local government. It would cover events that were mentioned in one news source, but not the other. It spoke against both the Latvian and Russian governments on several different issues. Also, it

presented issues evenly, letting both sides speak and present their views. This approach created a more balanced picture of the ethnic minority situation.

### **Results - Dominant Article Themes for The Baltic Times and ITAR-TASS**

The second part of the discourse analysis involved identifying the main themes of The Baltic Times and ITAR-TASS articles. This section of the paper will begin by looking at the themes that were discovered in the articles. Some of these themes included sub-themes which will also be listed. This list of themes was used to create pie-charts that showed how frequently the main themes emerged. The second part of this section will present a discussion of the graphs and the information they include. Afterwards a short discussion about some of the major differences between the sub-themes of each news source will be discussed. This analysis will show the themes each source employs to support its discourse. By giving voice to certain themes and quieting others, governments might shape the discourse to suit their goals.

The articles were initially divided into two main categories - internally based articles and externally based articles. The internally based articles examined what was going on inside Latvia's borders. An example of this would be an article about Latvian Russians protesting language laws inside the country without mention of Russia or an international organization. These articles dealt more with Latvian Russians and the issues they were dealing with rather than how outside governments and organizations were reacting to the issues of Latvian Russians. The second category contained articles written from a more external view which examined how

Latvia, other countries, and international organizations associated with each other concerning the issue of Latvian Russians. An article about the Russian government's reaction to a language law protest in Latvia would be an example of this category.

Originally, when I first read the articles I had problems grouping the articles into categories. I decided to subdivide the articles based on the perspective they took, internal or external because the articles could be easily divided up this way. Also, it was quite clear into which category each article would fall. This allowed me to pick out sub-themes and to see if the sub-themes for domestic issues were similar to the sub-themes for international issues by news source. This analysis was useful in showing similarities and differences for the two perspective types. I was curious to see if the Russian based ITAR-TASS articles pursued similar themes to The Baltic Times. The articles that had internal perspectives dealt with issues and had themes that were related to identity issues. These articles either dealt with local groups or the government of Latvia trying to change the identity of the country by changing language and education laws. These articles were quite different from the articles written from an external perspective that dealt with issues happening outside of Latvia. In these articles an outside country (typically Russia) or organization (typically the European Union or NATO) would try to control what was going on inside Latvia by applying pressure. Russia might want Latvia to give Latvian Russians citizenship, so they stress the issue in the context of other issues like the Latvian-Russian border treaty.

While I was reading the articles, I wrote down the main themes I encountered. Several of the articles had more than one theme. By the time I finished reading the articles, I had written over thirty themes. Then I categorized and rearranged them with less dominant themes under a more dominant theme. Examples of this rearranging are the “Border Agreement” and “Russian Economic Sanctions against Latvia” themes which I put under the main theme of “Geopolitical Issues”. The following is the list of themes that I used; the sub-themes are indented under their major theme.

- Protection of the Rights and Interests of Ethnic Russians
  - General and Human Rights
  - Protect Right to learn in Russian in schools/Protection of Russian culture
  - Language Laws/Reforms including 60/40 Law
  - Discrimination in Government
- Citizenship Laws
  - Citizenship Laws – General
  - Lack of Citizenship (non-citizens)
  - Lack of Voting Rights
  - Denying Citizenship and Deportations
- Interpreting History Differently
  - Interpreting History Differently – General
  - Victory Day – May 9
  - Legionnaires’ Day – March 16
- Integration, Naturalization, and Assimilation
- Protect Latvian Language, Culture, and Latvian Majority
- Protesting
  - Protesting – General
  - Protesting – Education Reforms
- Geopolitical Aspects
  - Border Agreement
  - Consistent EU Standards/Ethnic Russian Skepticism towards EU
  - Russian Economic Sanctions against Latvia
  - Latvian Russian Migration/Either to Russia or west
  - Improve the state of Ethnic Russians
  - Lack of Entry – persona non grata
- EU/NATO Candidacy
  - Both EU/NATO
  - NATO

EU  
Genocide  
    Genocide against Ethnic Russians  
    Genocide against Latvians  
Governmental Corruption  
Ethnic Russians IV Drug Users with HIV/AIDS

After I had finished grouping and categorizing the themes, eleven main themes remained. These eleven main themes were used to construct the graphs in Figure 4.1 and 4.2. Figure 4.1 depicts graphs which display the percentage of themes for the internally based articles, while Figure 4.2 displays the percentage of themes for the externally based articles. Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2 were derived from Appendix 3 and Appendix 4 which show the number of articles that contain each theme. Appendix 3 shows the internally based articles while Appendix 4 shows the externally based articles.

### **Graphs of Internally Focused Articles**

Figure 4.1 shows the percentage of the main themes for the articles by news source written from the internal perspective. These are the articles that focused primarily with what was going on inside of Latvia's borders. Outside organizations and governments were mentioned very little if at all in these articles. Looking at the graphs, the percentage for each of the themes is the number of themes in a category divided by the total number of themes. If a theme from the key is not present in the graph, it means that theme was not present in the internal perspective of that news source.

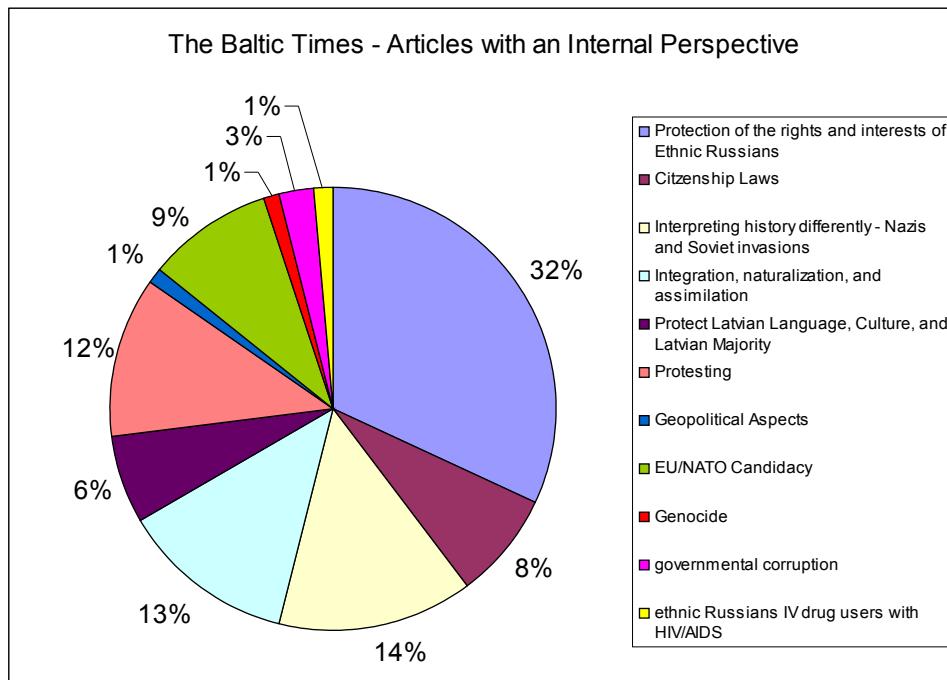
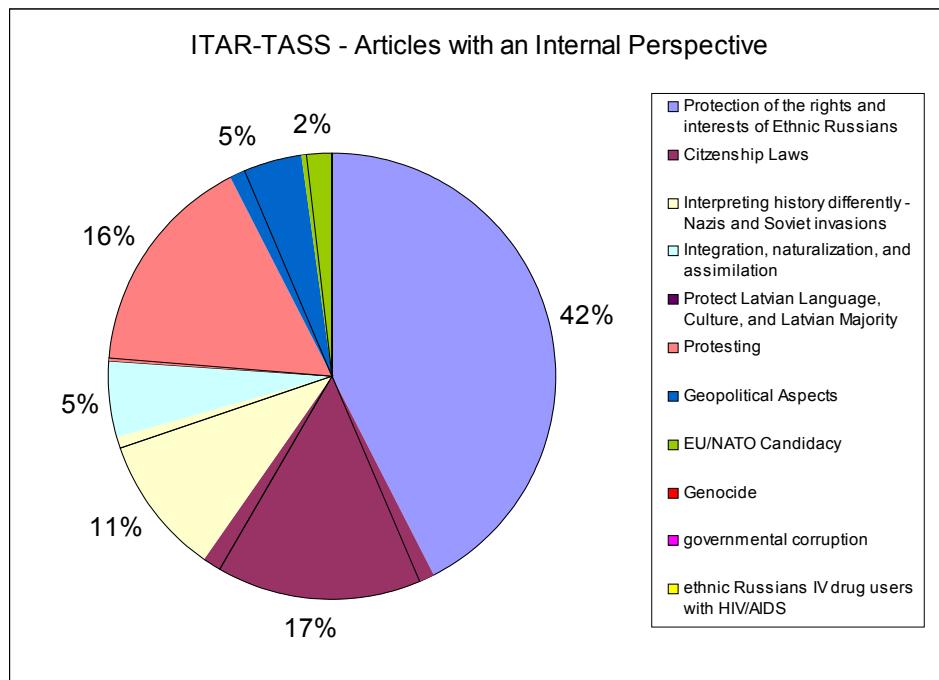


Figure 4.1 - Breakdown of ITAR-TASS and The Baltic Times articles with an internal perspective

Looking at these graphs, it can be seen that the theme of “Protecting the rights and interest of Ethnic Russians” occurs more often in ITAR-TASS, than in The Baltic

Times. This is also the case for the theme "Citizenship Laws". By bringing these two themes up frequently, ITAR-TASS keeps these issues fresh in the minds of their readers. Readers are reminded about how Latvian Russians are without certain rights, which in turn paints a negative image of Latvia.

Compared to ITAR-TASS, The Baltic Times has a more even distribution of themes in its coverage. They present more issues than ITAR-TASS, including themes not mentioned in ITAR-TASS like "Protection of Latvian Language, Culture and Latvian Majority". By incorporating the idea that the Latvian culture should be preserved in its own territory, it suggests that if one wants to preserve the Russian culture, one should do it in Russia, not Latvia. ITAR-TASS does not bring up this theme because it runs counter to what they are trying to stress: the rights and interests of Latvian Russians.

A few more (approximately 7%) Baltic Times articles contained the theme "Integration, naturalization, and assimilation" than ITAR-TASS articles. Articles included in this theme used the terms integration, naturalization, or assimilation somewhere within their text. The reason more Baltic Times contained this theme might be because if ITAR-TASS mentions these terms in their articles, it could be seen as Russia wanting the two cultures to merge into one. Instead ITAR-TASS promotes two separate cultural identities including two different schools teaching subjects in different languages. The Baltic Times uses terms like "integration" more frequently and covers "protection of the rights and interests of Ethnic Russians" less, to promote the idea of a more unified country with one common identity. In contrast,

the Russian government would prefer a Latvia with two separate cultural identities with the Russian cultural identity siding with and being controlled by Moscow. By controlling Latvia's ethnic Russian population, it would give Russia a continued influence over its former territory. The more Latvian Russians who become incorporated into Latvian society, the less influence Russia will have on Latvia's government and policies.

The most unique theme I found was the "Ethnic Russians IV drug users with HIV/AIDS". This theme only appeared in one long Baltic Times' article entitled "News Latvia: To prevent an epidemic". The article described HIV/AIDS has spread across the Baltic region using such terms as "wildfire" and "explosion". In one part, it states that most of the people infected with HIV/AIDS in the Baltics are IV drug users and that IV drug users are predominantly ethnic Russians. It also goes on to state that one reason Lithuania might have fewer cases of HIV/AIDS is because it has less of an ethnic Russian population (News Latvia: To prevent an epidemic, 2005).

By identifying ethnic Russians as the primary ethnic group carrying HIV/AIDS, the Latvian government creates a fear and mistrust of Latvian Russians. This scenario is similar to the germ panics against new immigrants in the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century (Subramaniam, 2005). Stereotyping Latvian Russians as IV drug users with HIV/AIDS portrays them as dirty, lawbreaking individuals that might infect good, hardworking ethnic Latvians. The Latvian government might use this fear to keep Latvian Russians from integrating in society.

## **Tables of Internally Focused Articles**

The graphs in Figure 4.1 were generated from the charts in Appendix 3 which breaks down each category on the graph into sub-divisions. Two of these sub-divisions are particularly interesting. The first is under “Protection of the Rights and Interests of Ethnic Russians” in the sub-category of “Language Laws/Reforms including 60/40 Law”. The percentage of ITAR-TASS articles under this sub-category was 36% compared to 60% for The Baltic Times. Since the 60/40 Law seeks to assimilate the ethnic Russian population into Latvian culture, one would think that ITAR-TASS would have printed more articles against the law. The reason it was not so is because the majority of ITAR-TASS articles do not go into much detail about Latvian Russians. Instead, it likes to bring up the group and say they are being discriminated against without saying how they are being discriminated against. One reason ITAR-TASS might neglect to go into a lot of detail is because the majority of Latvian Russians might hold the same viewpoint as their Latvian counterparts. If Russia actually tried to justify why it believes Latvia is discriminating against Latvian Russians it might discover that it has a rather weak case.

The other interesting issue is the sub-category “Lack of Voting Rights” under the “Citizenship Laws” category. ITAR-TASS includes the “Lack of Voting Rights” in two of its articles. This theme pertains to ethnic Russian non-citizens’ lack of voting rights. The Baltic Times does not mention this sub-theme in any of their stories written from an internal perspective. Both news sources mention lack of citizenship equally (ITAR-TASS 62%, The Baltic Times 50%), but only ITAR-TASS believes it

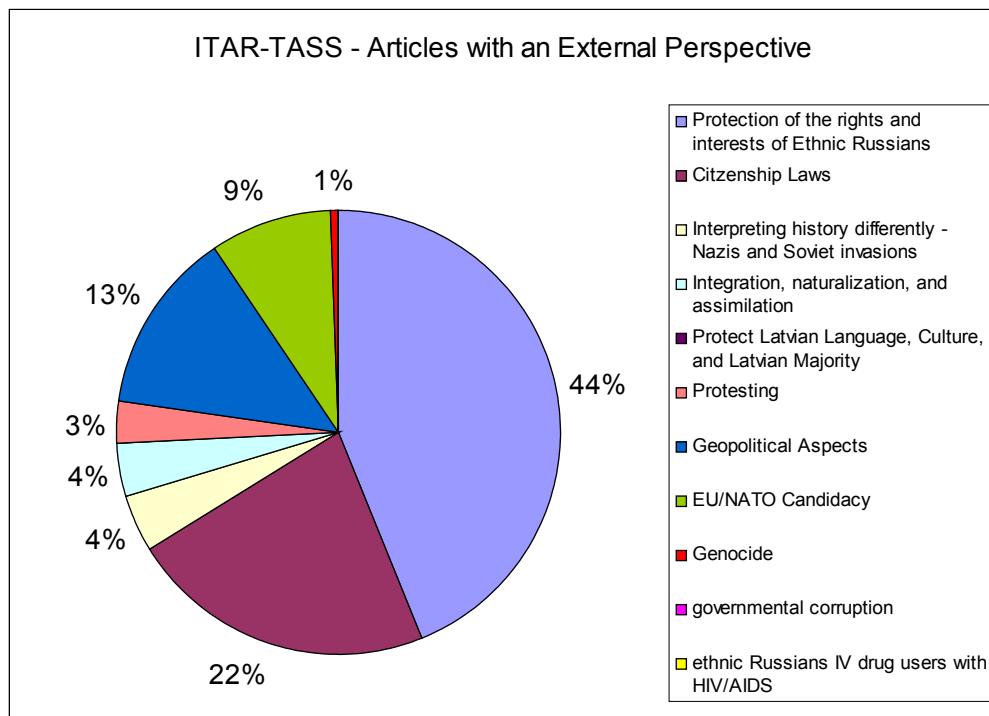
is important to mention that lack of citizenship also entails a lack of voting rights.

Russia believes that voting rights are important because who can vote determines who will be in power. Russia sees Latvia's denial of Latvian Russian voting rights as a way to keep them out of power. Russia likes to reiterate this fact, while the Western world has stronger feelings over citizenship and feels that it is the more important issue.

Acquiring citizenship is more than just being able to vote. Once a person acquires it, they leave part of their old national identity behind in favor of their new national identity, something Russia is afraid will happen when Latvian Russians receive their Latvian citizenship.

### Graphs of Externally Focused Articles

Figure 4.2 shows the graphs of the main themes for articles that were classified under an external perspective.



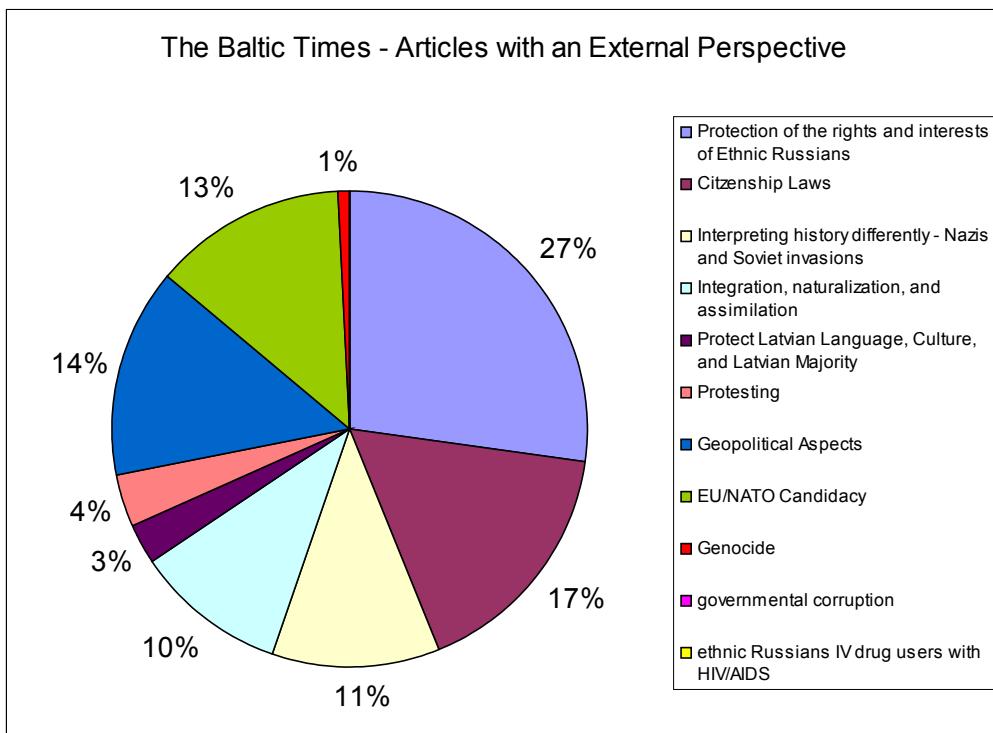


Figure 4.2 - Breakdown of ITAR-TASS and The Baltic Times articles with an external perspective

The greatest difference in percent coverage, once again, is in the category of “Protection of the rights and interests of Ethnic Russians”. Of the themes in ITAR-TASS, 43% of all the themes are this one, while it occurs in The Baltic Times only 27% of the time. Since these articles contain the opinions and policies of governments and organizations located outside of Latvia, it stands to reason that the Russian news source, ITAR-TASS, would write more stories from the Russian government’s perspective. The Russian government is using this issue to show that Latvia is not ready to join NATO and the European Union. This in turn promotes ITAR-TASS to print more articles with this theme to undermine Latvian plans to join these organizations.

The other notable difference is within the category of “Integration, naturalization and assimilation”. Once again, The Baltic Times’ articles contain this theme more often than ITAR-TASS. The Baltic Times contained this topic in 10% of the total themes, opposed to 4% of the total number of themes for ITAR-TASS. ITAR-TASS is reluctant to print articles that contain this theme because they then would appear to be promoting it. Instead, they print articles that focus on the differences between the two ethnic groups, not on how they might come together and form a new national identity. The Baltic Times mentions the terms integration, naturalization, and assimilation in their articles more than ITAR-TASS. The Baltic Times has the perspective that for Latvia to progress, the Russian population will need to integrate, naturalize, and assimilate into the Latvian society thus creating a common integrated society.

One category that stands out is the “Genocide” category. The articles in this category mention the word “genocide” within their text in relation to Latvia. Of the three articles that fell into this category, two describe Soviet deportations that occurred around World War II. These two articles describe the Soviet deportations as the “Latvian genocide” even though one of the articles clearly states that both Latvian and Russian families were deported. These articles remind the international community about how the Soviet Union occupied Latvia while they did nothing about it. The other article contains comments made by the then Mayor of Moscow, Yuri Luzhkev, about how Latvia’s treatment of its Latvian Russians was similar to

“genocide”. He might have used the term to draw attention to the issues of Latvian Russians.

### **Tables of Externally Focused Articles**

The graphs in Figure 4.2 were generated from the charts in Appendix 4 which is a breakdown of the main categories for the external perspective with their sub-categories. The two categories that are the most telling for this discourse analysis are “Protection of the Rights and Interests of Ethnic Russians” category and the “Geopolitical” category. The former contained themes that included issues related to human rights, Russian schools, and language laws and reforms. Similar to the internal perspective, “Language Laws/Reforms including 60/40 Law” theme under the category of “Protection of the Rights and Interests of Ethnic Russians” is a larger percentage in The Baltic Times (41%) than in ITAR-TASS (24%). Again, it is odd that The Baltic Times covers the theme “Language Laws/Reforms including 60/40 Law” more than ITAR-TASS. It might be expected that the Russian publication which stresses the rights and interests of ethnic Russians might also be expected to cover the language laws that are suppressing the Russian language. ITAR-TASS likes to bring up this issue but they do it in a more general sense without explaining what the law is about or how it works. ITAR-TASS’s behavior suggests that Latvia’s language laws might be legal within the European Union and lack a discriminating element. Russia might also fear that these language laws might draw the two ethnic groups closer together which might decrease Russia’s influence with Latvian Russians.

The approach taken by ITAR-TASS to cover the language laws and reforms is quite different than that of The Baltic Times. The Baltic Times puts more emphasis on the language law issues. It is written for embassy personnel and businessmen who want to be informed about the region. The publication realizes that its readers are less concerned about ethnic lines and more concerned about getting a complete and accurate story. The people who read The Baltic Times need to be more informed about the region because they are making complicated and more international types of decisions than the basic readership of ITAR-TASS.

Under the “Geopolitical” category there are two sub-categories that should be noted. The first is “Latvian Russian Migration/ Either to Russia or west”. The Baltic Times uses this topic in four articles, while ITAR-TASS did not bring up this issue. If the ethnic Russian population left Latvia, Russia could not bring the issue of their rights and mistreatment up with organizations like the European Union. Russia also realizes that most Latvian Russians prefer to live in Latvia rather than Russia because of its higher standard of living. The Russian government keeps raising the issue of Latvian Russian citizenship with organizations like the European Union and NATO without necessarily having the basic support of Latvian Russians. The Latvian Russians who want to remain in Latvia and become citizens take the language test and receive their citizenship. The ones who do not care if they have Latvian citizenship or not do not take the language test and still remain in Latvia.

The other sub-category under “Geopolitical” that is worth noting is “Improve the State of Ethnic Russians”. This theme appears in four articles for ITAR-TASS but

is not mentioned in The Baltic Times. The Russian government, through ITAR-TASS, likes to stress to international organizations, like the European Union, that it is their duty to encourage Latvia to improve the conditions of the Russians living in their borders. The Baltic Times does not believe it is in their jurisdiction to tell the European Union to mandate that Latvia improve the welfare of its ethnic Russians.

### **Summary of Dominant Article Themes for The Baltic Times and ITAR-TASS**

In summary, ITAR-TASS presents fewer themes in articles concerning Latvian Russians. They tend to stay with themes that emphasize the differences between Latvians and Latvian Russians, and a need to protect the Russian culture and language in Latvia. There are few themes that deal with integrating the two cultures or assimilating the Russian population. In contrast, The Baltic Times uses themes that show the Latvian perspective as well as the Russian perspective. They write not only about preserving the Russian culture but also about maintaining the Latvian one. They use themes like integration and assimilation to suggest building one common culture that both groups can identify with. Through ITAR-TASS, Russia uses its political weight to stress issues like Latvian Russian rights in Latvia. The Baltic Times is not tied to a specific government and therefore does not stress the policies of a certain government.

Russia does not want to see ethnic Russians living in other former Soviet states to integrate into those countries. They want them to stay culturally and politically tied to Russia. By doing so, Russia still wields some power over its former territory. Russia wishes for Latvian Russians to be given voting rights in Latvia.

Russia believes that if Latvian Russians were able to vote then they might be able to sway Latvia's government back within Russia's influence. Latvia does not wish for its ethnic Russians to be a separate group apart from its established Latvian nationalism. If Latvian Russians want to acquire citizenship and vote they must be able to pass a Latvian language test which will help them integrate into Latvian culture. By learning the Latvian language and culture to acquire their citizenship, these Latvian Russians move away from Russian nationalism and closer to Latvian nationalism. The Latvian Russians who do not want to learn Latvian and acquire citizenship are not given the opportunity to vote and shape Latvia's government which keeps a more Russian influence out of Latvia's government.

This concludes the discourse analysis. The final chapter will tie the findings of this chapter back to the general theories that were talked about in the opening chapter.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusions**

In the preceding chapter, the results of the discourse analysis were discussed. It was found that the Moscow based news service, ITAR-TASS, systematically highlighted the topic of Latvian Russian citizenship in articles that dealt with issues which were not directly related to the rights of ethnic Russians in Latvia. An example of this is the Latvian Russian border treaty. ITAR-TASS and The Baltic News Service covered certain events and protests that portrayed Latvian Russians as either victims or troublemakers and then chose not to cover other events that showed Latvian Russians from a different perspective. An example of this was the manner in which The Baltic News Service covered the education reform protests in January 2004 when the Education Ministry's door was set on fire, but failed to cover the September 2004 education protests when nothing violent or disrespectful happened. ITAR-TASS took the opposite approach by not covering the January 2004 education reform protests because it might shed negative light on Latvian Russian behavior. Instead, they chose to cover the September 2004 demonstrations during which the Latvian Russians protested non-violently and portrayed a better image to the world.

Each news source only covered the events that portrayed Latvian Russians in a manner that corresponded with its view of them. The events that ran counter to these images of Latvian Russians were only covered a little or not at all. The news source that was an exception to this was The Baltic Times. It did a better job of covering all the events and gave multiple opinions for each event. An example of this was the January 2004 protests. The Baltic Times published an article about how the

Education Ministry's door was set on fire, but it also included comments from some pro-Russian school officials denouncing the act as violence. This demonstrates that The Baltic Times is concerned with presenting the views of both parties to establish a more complete story.

Each news source presented its own discourse for the stories it covered. ITAR-TASS is a Russian publication and presented a discourse that mirrored the Russian government's ideas about Latvia. ITAR-TASS would print stories that made Latvian Russians look like victims of an unjust Western government. They strongly encouraged their fellow Russians in Latvia to preserve their Russian heritage and language and resist being assimilated into Latvian society. Maintaining a separate identity is in Russia's interest because it allows them to influence part of Latvia's population through a shared identity. The Baltic News Service promoted a discourse quite the opposite of ITAR-TASS. Being the news source for the Baltic countries, it would portray Latvian Russians as troublemakers that were working for Moscow. The Baltic News Service would write articles about how Russia was blowing the issue of Latvian Russians out of proportion just to make Latvia look bad. This Baltic centered discourse serves the purpose of showing a Latvian mistrust for Russia and its policies. The discourse offered by The Baltic Times was more moderate compared to the other two. This publication is used by foreign business people and embassies to update themselves on current events in the region. The people who read it need a publication that presents issues from both Russian and Latvian perspectives because they work with both sides every day.

This chapter will examine these findings within a framework of the theoretical concepts discussed in the first chapter. The first concept is Guntrum Herb's idea of national identity and how it is a combination of the ethnic and civic identities present in an area. Herb (1999) explains that ethnic identity is constructed over time by governments, scholars, and elites. The second concept relates to John Agnew and David Newman's theories about geopolitics. Agnew (1994) argues that a state's domestic and foreign relations are interrelated. They cannot be separated from one another because states are complex. What happens inside a state's borders affects not only internal dynamics but also its relations with other states. Newman (1999) builds on this idea with his concept of multiple territorial orderings which includes power sharing in reference to borders and commerce between states and international organizations like NATO and the European Union. The last theoretical concept comes from Robert Sack in the field of moral geography. This theory is broader and more overarching than the other two. It is a framework for using sweeping intrinsic goals to create a better place for all groups of people.

## **Identity Findings**

Each news source presented a different image of national identity for the Latvian Russian group. ITAR-TASS printed articles that portrayed Latvian Russians as victims of an unjust government and portrayed Russia as a state looking out for its people. These articles invoke a common Russian identity that links all ethnic Russians back to Russian territory. It also printed articles stressing the importance of keeping

the language of instruction in Latvia's Russian schools Russian. ITAR-TASS is printed out of Moscow and views stories from the Russian government's perspective. This perspective includes portraying Latvian Russian's ethnic identity as something that cannot be changed and will always be tied to Russia.

By using ITAR-TASS as its mouthpiece, the Russian government consistently brings up the issue of Latvian Russians' citizenship status which calls into question their civic identity. If Latvian Russians lack citizenship, then they also lack a civic identity which in many countries is a large part of a person's national identity. When Latvian Russians' weak civic identity and different ethnic identity are combined into the Latvian version of national identity it is quite different than that of an ethnic Latvian one. Not having a strong Latvian national identity causes Latvian Russians to not "fit in" to Latvian society. The Russian government presents the information with the aim to promote the two ethnic groups in Latvia as separate and prevent them from forming one comprehensive national identity. In contrast, by using terms like "integration" and "assimilation" in their articles, The Baltic Times promotes a more combined Latvian civic identity that works to include different groups instead of excluding them.

When different ethnic groups have the ability to express their culture openly, they are encouraged to participate and be more open towards their government. Different ethnic groups can embrace their individual ethnic identities while sharing the same civic identity. A state's national identity is formed when its civic identity and the different ethnic identities combine. These two types of identities can be combined

in many different ways to form a state's national identity. Some countries use the dominant ethnic identity as the major ingredient in their national identity while others use a more unifying civic identity. In the case of Ghanaian national identity, a common civic identity is used to bind different ethnic groups together to form a unified national identity. Latvia might also be able to use a strong common civic identity to promote a common national identity. This identity might consist of non-ethnic symbols that represent the whole or a particular image of the whole state like the flag, national anthem, and pledge of allegiance. These symbols have the ability to bind together the many diverse peoples living within a country. Also, athletic teams that represent the country in sporting events like the Olympic Games or the World Cup promote a common civic identity, especially if they include athletes from more than one ethnic group.

A common national identity can also be promoted by publishing newspapers in multiple languages so that different ethnic groups can obtain their news from a common source. Publishing a newspaper in both Latvian and Russian would help to create a common discourse for both groups of people. To preserve its readership, a multi-lingual news source has to run stories from multiple points of view which do not alienate one particular ethnic group. A newspaper in both Russian and Latvian might focus on common issues which are important to both groups and that affect the country as a whole.

By establishing its citizenship laws shortly after regaining independence, the Latvian government divided the population into Latvians and Russians. These

citizenship laws were designed to make sure that ethnic Latvians might remain in control of the government. After years of Russian dominated Soviet control, ethnic Latvians wanted control over their own territory. If ethnic Russians were not allowed to vote or hold governmental office, Latvians might remain in power. By basing citizenship on knowledge of the Latvian Language, the two groups were not only divided along ethnic lines but also by citizenship status. Unforeseen by both groups, the Latvian government's citizenship laws have actually helped to integrate Latvian Russians into Latvian society. At first, the citizenship laws created a division between the two groups. Ethnic Russians lacked the language skills to be given citizenship status. Latvian government officials may have thought that this would dishearten ethnic Russians and encourage them to leave Latvia. Instead the Latvian Russians stayed and many of them acquired citizenship by learning Latvian. By adopting part of the Latvian culture, many Latvian Russians have changed their Russian ethnic identity by blending it with the Latvian identity. They have formed a new Latvian Russian ethnic identity which provides them with a unique position. They have the ability to speak Russian and other ethnic Russians feel more comfortable doing business with Latvian Russians. Latvian Russians realize that their future is with Europe and that is where they want to stay. Latvian Russians' unique position might serve as a bridge between Russia and Europe. In the long run, this unique Latvian Russian identity might be beneficial for Latvia, Russia and the Latvian Russians.

## **Geopolitical Findings**

Identity issues not only play a role inside a country's borders but also on the world stage. Things that happen inside the boundaries of the state often affect what happens outside the state. The ramifications of Latvia's citizenship laws have not been confined to domestic issues in Latvia. They have affected relations between Latvia and Russia and also between Latvia and the European Union. With the rise of the European Union and NATO, state governments in Europe have relinquished some of their authority to receive the benefits of belonging to these larger organizations. Sometimes tension is created when state government policies do not mesh with the policies of these larger multi-state organizations. As Agnew (1994) points out, a state's foreign and domestic policies cannot be separated. What goes on inside a state affects what goes on outside a state, and what happens outside a state also affects what happens inside a state. If the ruling party decides that another ethnic group in its country is not qualified to be citizens based on their ethnicity, how can it separate that type of thinking from how it behaves on the world stage with other states? By mistreating Russians inside their own borders, Latvian officials may also be seen as being disrespectful of Russians outside of Latvia. Russia still plays a role in Latvia's economic and energy sectors which might serve as an incentive for Latvia to try and cooperate with Russia. Even if the European Union and NATO have vowed to protect Latvia, it is still wise for Latvia to treat Russians within its borders well.

Latvia's young Russian speakers might also serve as a link between Russia and Latvia. Typically, they leave school knowing three languages: Russian, Latvian,

and English (Ijabs, 2006). These skills put them in a unique position where they can act as liaisons between Russia, Latvia, and the rest of Europe. They realize their cultural heritage is with Russia but that their future is with Europe. Unlike their parents, they might be more open to new ideas and a willingness to work with other ethnic groups. Latvia might find it beneficial to encourage younger Russian speakers to stay in Latvia because they might be able to help ease some of the political tension between Latvia and Russia. It is ironic that during the Soviet period it was the Latvians who benefited from being forced to learn another culture. Now it is the Russian population benefiting by being forced to learn the Latvian language and culture.

Over time and as the old generation passes away, Latvian Russians will either become more integrated into Latvian society or they will leave and go to Western Europe. The ones who stay will most likely force Latvia to become more integrated. This is likely to cause a change in the Russian language media which will be unable to portray issues in opposition to the Latvian government. Instead it may become more of a cultural media source giving information about Latvian Russian culture inside the country (Šulmane, 2006). Something similar might occur with ITAR-TASS. One possible scenario, with the integration of Latvian Russians, is that ITAR-TASS might stop running articles describing the mistreatment of Latvian Russians by the Latvian government. It would be hard for Russia to say that Latvia is mistreating its Latvian Russians if a majority of them become citizens of Latvia. Latvian Russians would have made clear their choice to stay in Latvia. If the Latvian Russians have a

problem with the Latvian government, they can vote to change the government in power. With this scenario, Russia would be unable to use the issues of Latvian Russians as leverage in every foreign policy issue between itself and Latvia, because Latvian Russians would not need Russia to defend their rights.

### **Moral Findings**

In Sack's view, intrinsic judgments are more useful than instrumental judgments in creating places that "see through to the real" while increasing the diversity and complexity of the world. An example of intrinsic judgments is when governments create laws that benefit all groups within their borders, and an example of instrumental judgments is when governments create laws that keep a certain group in power. "Real and good" places are complex places with great variety. They expose people to different cultures and ideas thus expanding a person's knowledge of the world. We could argue that there are several reasons why it is in Latvia's best interest to integrate its Russian population in order to create a common society. By tolerating the use of the Russian language, the Latvian government would show respect for the Russian speaking ethnic group and encourage them to be part of the national identity and integrate (Djaéckova , 2003). This gesture might also encourage diversity in the country which Sack believes is a characteristic of a place that "sees through to the real". This idea of diversity also applies to the news sources used in this research. By presenting different views and using speakers from both sides of the Latvian Russian debate, The Baltic Times is a more balanced and diverse news source than either The

Baltic News Service or ITAR-TASS. The other two news sources promote a specific discourse through their selective coverage of some events that leads to a more closed society that does not promote different views and opinions.

The government of Latvia could potentially base the criteria of civic identity less on the instrumental goal of keeping power consolidated within the majority Latvian ethnic group, and more on intrinsic values that could lead to a more diverse, open and fair society. By selectively representing the situation, the government disenfranchises one third of its population based solely on their ethnic identity. This disenfranchisement causes tensions among ethnic groups and creates a place with the potential to divide them even more. Instead, intrinsic goals would lead governments to create laws that do not favor one group over another but promote an equal relationship among all ethnic groups. Governments need to pass laws that create cohesion in society by allowing different cultures to retain their ethnic identity without having to sacrifice their civic rights.

Another way in which Latvia might benefit from providing citizenship to ethnic Russians is that ethnic Russians have much to offer Latvia. The country has one of the lowest fertility rates in the world, which means that in the future they will experience a decline in people of working age (Eglīte, 2006). If they move away, many Latvian Russians are able to receive higher paying jobs in other European Union countries which encourages them to leave Latvia. Since the Latvian Russian population already knows the customs and is familiar with Latvia, it makes more sense for the Latvian government to encourage these trained workers to remain in

Latvia than to try and recruit untrained workers from Ukraine and Russia. The time and money that Latvia puts into educating these Russian speakers who end up leaving Latvia for Western Europe is wasted because these potential educated workers leave the country (Eglīte, 2006). Instead, the government would do better to integrate ethnic Russians into its society and encourage them to stay.

By elevating ethnic identity over civic identity as the criteria for citizenship, the Latvian government is denying Russian speakers their civic identity. In doing so, the ruling party creates a state based on instrumental values that gives privilege to just one group of people living in the country. Minority groups might not feel as alienated in the societies in which they live if the ruling government would allow them to integrate into the general society. The 2005 riots involving poorer North African immigrants in Paris is an example of a government failing to listen to its ethnic minorities until tensions boiled over. If leaders strove for more integration they would create a place that “sees through to the real” for all the people living in their country, not only those who belong to the dominant ethnic group (Sack, 1997). This type of action is based on intrinsic values because it includes multiple ethnic groups which leads to a more diverse and complex place. Using intrinsic judgments to craft citizenship laws, governments might prevent potential problems before they occur.

### **Closing Thoughts**

After reading the newspaper articles, I noticed that the issues among ethnic Latvians and Russians in Latvia have been decreasing over time. Fewer articles were

about demonstrations, and only ITAR-TASS included ethnic Russians in the issue of the border treaty with Latvia. This observation is also true with the issues concerning Latvian Russians in regard to the governments of Latvia and Russia. Slowly but surely, Latvian Russians are integrating and becoming part of Latvian society, especially as the old generation passes away. The younger Latvian Russian generation is learning the Latvian language better than previous generations, giving them potentially better insight into the Latvian culture (Djaéckova, 2003). Due to the country's high rate of intermarriage, it is probable that in time these two ethnic groups will form a new mixed ethnic identity with a common history. The government of Latvia would do well to promote the integration of Latvian Russians into Latvian society. Integration would allow Latvian Russians the ability to grow into their new roles and act as an intermediary between Latvia and Russia. This will also allow Latvian Russians to transfer western ideals to their relatives still living in Russia, which may help Russia become more fair and free within its own borders.

The world in which we live is a very complex place. Issues of identity, geopolitics and morality all combine to form a complex maze that we as humans must navigate. This is no easy task, and governments which are made up of ordinary people do make mistakes. Basing complex decisions on common intrinsic moral values allows governments a framework to ensure a better society for all the country's residents. This also helps in relations with neighboring countries like Russia which share citizens of a common ethnic group. Last, by using intrinsic moral values as a

guideline, a resident's citizenship would be based on their civic identity whether or not they speak Latvian.

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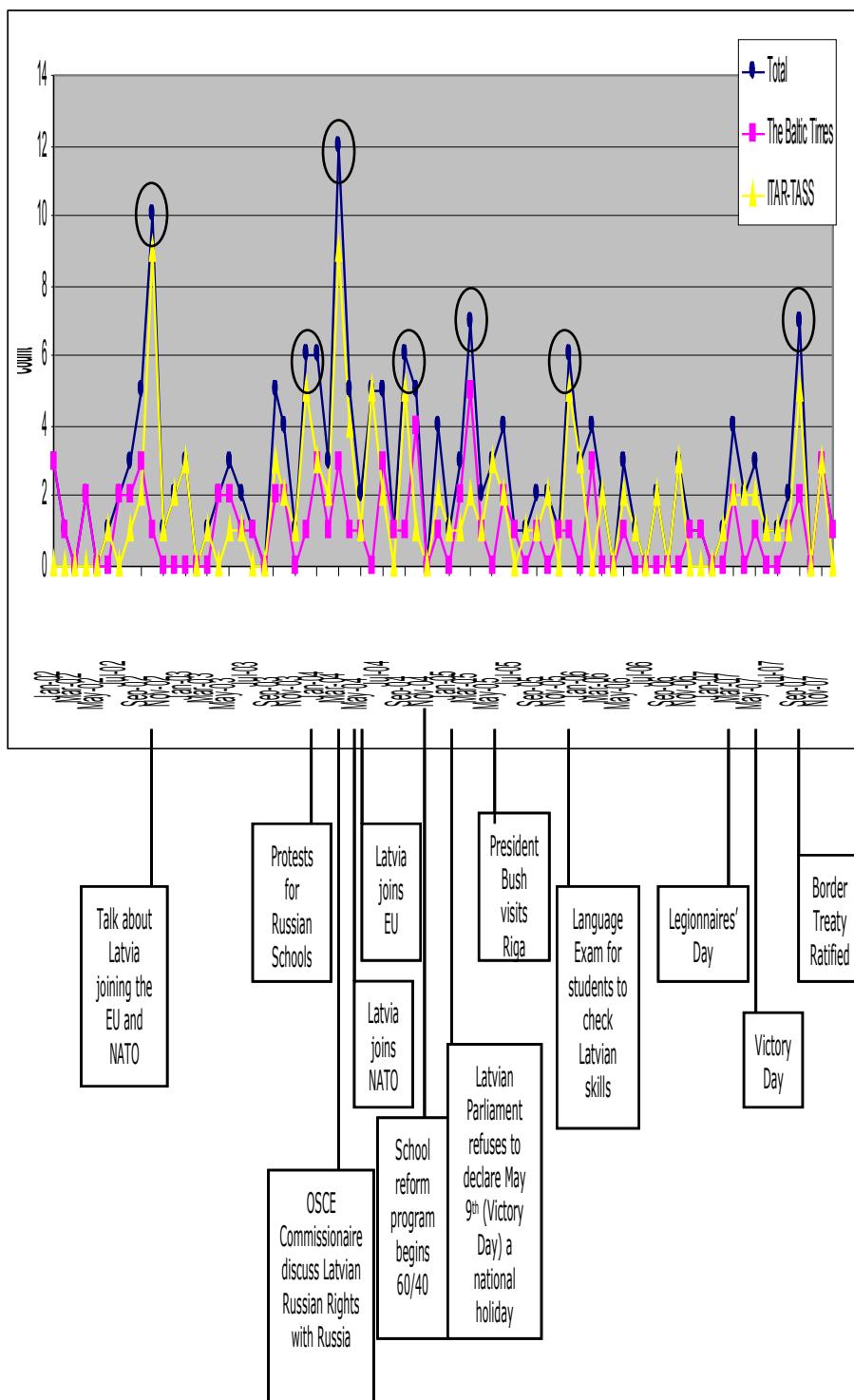
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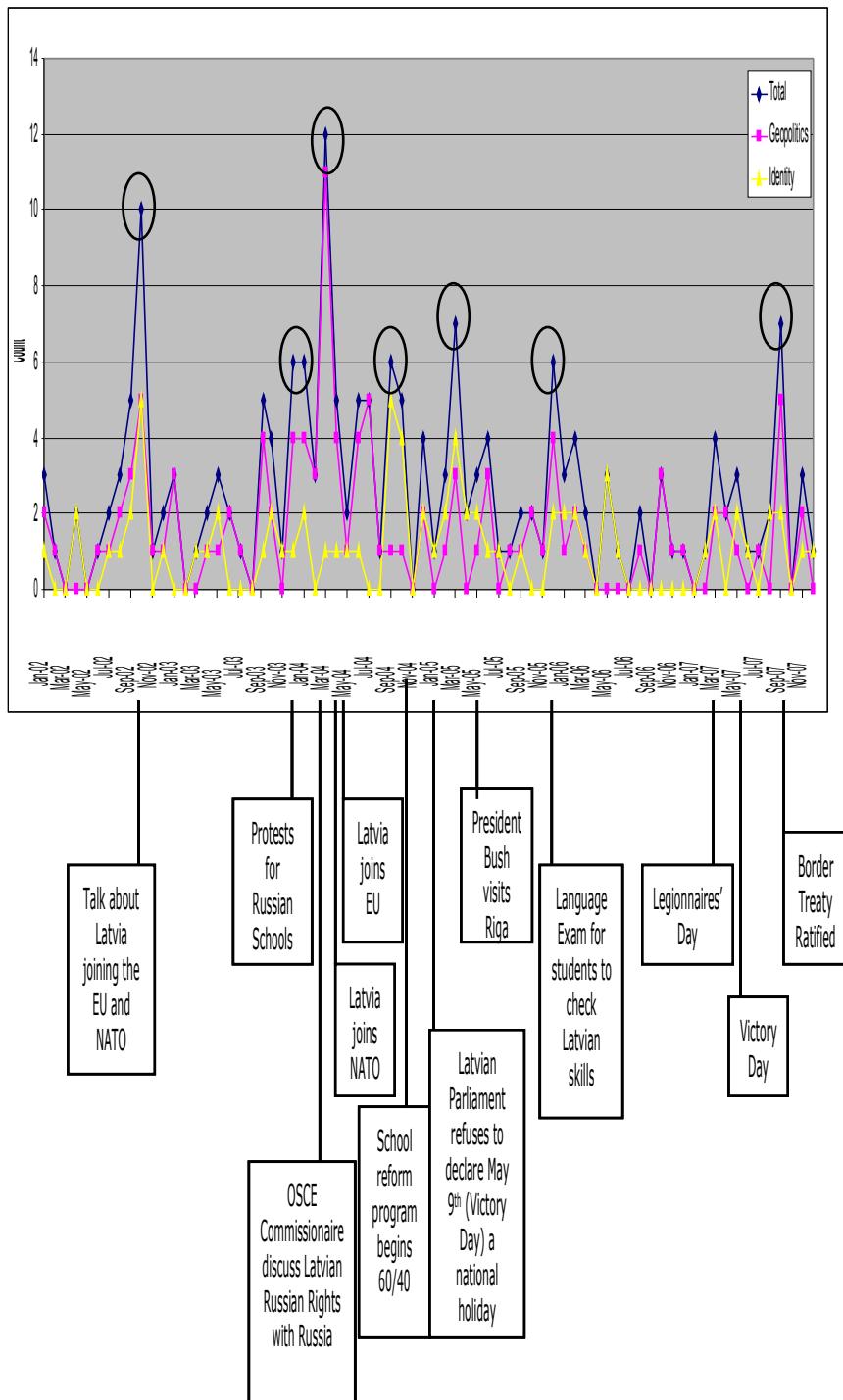
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### Appendix 1

Number of newspaper articles per month by newspaper source.



**Appendix 2**  
Number of newspaper Articles per month by category.

### **The Baltic Times - Articles with an Internal Perspective**

- 25 - Protection of the Rights and Interests of Ethnic Russians
  - 5 - General and Human Rights
  - 4 - Protect Right to learn in Russian in schools/  
Protection of Russian culture
  - 15 - Language Laws/Reforms including 60/40 Law
  - 1 - Discrimination in Government
- 6 - Citizenship Laws
  - 1 - Citizenship Laws – General
  - 3 - Lack of Citizenship (non-citizens)
  - 0 - Lack of Voting Rights
  - 2 - Denying Citizenship and Deportations
- 11 - Interpreting History Differently
  - 7 - Interpreting History Differently – General
  - 0 - Victory Day – May 9
  - 4 - Legionaires' Day – March 16
- 10 - Integration, Naturalization, and Assimilation
  - 5 - Protect Latvian Language, Culture, and Latvian Majority
  - 9 - Protesting
    - 3 - Protesting – General
    - 6 - Protesting – Education Reforms
- 1 - Geopolitical Aspects
  - 0 - Border Agreement
  - 0 - Consistent EU Standards/Ethnic Russian Skepticism towards EU
  - 0 - Russian Economic Sanctions against Latvia
  - 1 - Latvian Russian Migration/ Either to Russia or west
  - 0 - Improve the State of Ethnic Russians
  - 0 - Baltic Accession to the EU
  - 0 - Lack of Entry – persona non grata
- 7 - EU/NATO Candidacy
  - 1 - Both EU/NATO
  - 0 - NATO
  - 6 - EU
- 1 - Genocide
  - 1 - Genocide against Ethnic Russians
  - 0 - Genocide against Latvians
- 2 - Governmental Corruption
  - 1 - Ethnic Russians IV Drug Users with HIV/AIDS

### **ITAR-TASS - Articles with an Internal Perspective**

- 39 - Protection of the Rights and Interests of Ethnic Russians
  - 12 - General and Human Rights
  - 13 - Protect Right to learn in Russian in schools/  
Protection of Russian culture
  - 14 - Language Laws/Reforms including 60/40 Law
  - 0 - Discrimination in Government
- 16 - Citizenship Laws
  - 1 - Citizenship Laws – General
  - 10 - Lack of Citizenship (non-citizens)
  - 2 - Lack of Voting Rights
  - 3 - Denying Citizenship and Deportations
- 10 - Interpreting History Differently
  - 4 - Interpreting History Differently – General
  - 3 - Victory Day – May 9
  - 3 - Legionaires' Day – March 16
- 5 - Integration, Naturalization, and Assimilation
  - 0 - Protect Latvian Language, Culture, and Latvian Majority
- 15 - Protesting
  - 3 - Protesting – General
  - 12 - Protesting – Education Reforms
- 5 - Geopolitical Aspects
  - 0 - Border Agreement
  - 1 - Consistent EU Standards/Ethnic Russian Skepticism towards EU
  - 0 - Russian Economic Sanctions against Latvia
  - 2 - Latvian Russian Migration/ Either to Russia or west
  - 2 - Improve the State of Ethnic Russians
  - 0 - Baltic Accession to the EU
  - 0 - Lack of Entry – persona non grata
- 2 - EU/NATO Candidacy
  - 1 - Both EU/NATO
  - 0 - NATO
  - 1 - EU
- 0 - Genocide
  - 0 - Genocide against Ethnic Russians
  - 0 - Genocide against Latvians
- 0 - Governmental Corruption
  - 0 - Ethnic Russians IV Drug Users with HIV/AIDS

### **Appendix 3**

Number of articles with different themes located in ITAR-TASS and The Baltic Times with an Internal Perspective.

### **The Baltic Times – Articles with an External Perspective**

29 - Protection of the Rights and Interests of Ethnic Russians  
13 - General and Human Rights  
4 - Protect Right to learn in Russian in schools/  
    Protection of Russian culture  
12 - Language Laws/Reforms including 60/40 Law  
0 - Discrimination in Government

18 - Citizenship Laws  
4 - Citizenship Laws – General  
11 - Lack of Citizenship (non-citizens)  
1 - Lack of Voting Rights  
2 - Denying Citizenship and Deportations

12 - Interpreting History Differently  
11 - Interpreting History Differently – General  
1 - Victory Day – May 9  
0 - Legionaires' Day – March 16

11 - Integration, Naturalization, and Assimilation  
3 - Protect Latvian Language, Culture, and Latvian Majority  
4 - Protesting  
1 - Protesting – General  
3 - Protesting – Education Reforms

15 - Geopolitical Aspects  
3 - Border Agreement  
1 - Consistent EU Standards/Ethnic Russian Skepticism  
    towards EU  
5 - Russian Economic Sanctions against Latvia  
4 - Latvian Russian Migration/ Either to Russia or west  
0 - Improve the State of Ethnic Russians  
0 - Baltic Accession to the EU  
2 - Lack of Entry – persona non grata

14 - EU/NATO Candidacy  
2 - Both EU/NATO  
6 - NATO  
6 - EU  
1 - Genocide  
0 - Genocide against Ethnic Russians  
1 - Genocide against Latvians

0 - Governmental Corruption  
0 - Ethnic Russians IV Drug Users with HIV/AIDS

### **ITAR-TASS – Articles with an External Perspective**

75 - Protection of the Rights and Interests of Ethnic Russians  
46 - General and Human Rights  
11 - Protect Right to learn in Russian in schools/  
    Protection of Russian culture  
18 - Language Laws/Reforms including 60/40 Law  
0 - Discrimination in Government

38 - Citizenship Laws  
1 - Citizenship Laws – General  
27 - Lack of Citizenship (non-citizens)  
8 - Lack of Voting Rights  
2 - Denying Citizenship and Deportations

7 - Interpreting History Differently  
6 - Interpreting History Differently – General  
1 - Victory Day – May 9  
0 - Legionaires' Day – March 16

7 - Integration, Naturalization, and Assimilation  
0 - Protect Latvian Language, Culture, and Latvian Majority  
5 - Protesting  
1 - Protesting – General  
4 - Protesting – Education Reforms

23 - Geopolitical Aspects  
7 - Border Agreement  
3 - Consistent EU Standards/Ethnic Russian Skepticism  
    towards EU  
6 - Russian Economic Sanctions against Latvia  
0 - Latvian Russian Migration/ Either to Russia or west  
4 - Improve the State of Ethnic Russians  
0 - Baltic Accession to the EU  
3 - Lack of Entry – persona non grata

15 - EU/NATO Candidacy  
4 - Both EU/NATO  
1 - NATO  
10 - EU  
1 - Genocide  
1 - Genocide against Ethnic Russians  
0 - Genocide against Latvians

0 - Governmental Corruption  
0 - Ethnic Russians IV Drug Users with HIV/AIDS

### **Appendix 4**

Number of articles with different themes located in ITAR-TASS and The Baltic Times with an External Perspective.